



SHAPING NEIGHBOURHOODS: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAY AND INFORMAL RECREATION

DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

FEBRUARY 2012

PUBLISHED FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION

**LONDON PLAN, 2011
IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK**

MAYOR OF LONDON

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DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

SHAPING NEIGHBOURHOODS: CHILDREN AND YOUNG
PEOPLE'S PLAY AND INFORMAL RECREATION

FEBRUARY 2012

This draft guidance will form part of the over-arching Shaping Neighbourhoods SPG. It is currently envisaged that it will have 5 parts:

- A. Understanding Place
- B. Lifetime Neighbourhoods
- C. Neighbourhood Planning
- D. Children and Young People's Play and Informal Recreation
- E. Accessible London

These will be published for consultation during 2012.

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How to give your views

This document is published for consultation and your comments are invited.
Responses must be received by 5pm on 27th April 2012. They should be sent to:

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Or email to Play.SPG@london.gov.uk

If you send a response by email it is not necessary to also send a hard copy

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GLOSSARY

Play

"Play is a process that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. That is, children and young people determine and control the content and intent of their play, by following their own instincts, ideas and interests, in their own way for their own reasons." From Play Wales (2005) and endorsed by SkillsActive (May 2005)

Children and young people

Children (0-12) and young people (12+) have differing needs. While children will enjoy spaces with engaging play features and equipments that often require supervision, teenagers or young people aged 12 and over are more likely to adopt places that have little supervision, and where they can meet, hang out and take part in informal sport or physical recreational activities. The playable space typology (page and below) differentiates these spaces by group of age.

Playable space

A playable space is one where children's active play is a legitimate use of the space. Playable space typically includes some design elements that have 'play value': they act as a sign or signal to children and young people that the space is intended for their play. Playability is not just a matter of the physical characteristics of a space. It can also be influenced by social and cultural characteristics. For instance a space that is dominated by people hostile to children's presence is not playable, whatever its physical characteristics. London's built environment should be designed in order to make the public realm playable. In London, planners, developers, designers and architects are encouraged to

promote a culture that accommodates the presence of children in the built environment, inviting play throughout the city.

Multifunctional space

A Multifunctional space is a 'shared' public space, which meets the needs of different people at the same time. A public space where there are familiar playful or recreational features in the space can become an 'incidental' playable space.

Dedicated play space

Where play is identified as one of the prime functions. These include playgrounds, playing fields, skate parks and other recreation areas. Dedicated play spaces can be publically owned, open to public access and private (i.e. play areas in shopping centres, private gardens). They can be supervised (such as adventure playgrounds) or unsupervised. They may include formal equipments or be informal non-equipped areas, such as landscapes areas and playing fields that can be used for a variety of recreational activities. All dedicated play spaces should be genuinely playable to count as play provision. They should be accessible and provide unrestricted opportunities for play and informal recreation for children and young people. Dedicated play space can therefore be formal and informal. Informal provision should not replace formal provision entirely.

Dedicated play space can fall under the following typology:

Doorstep playable space: a landscaped space including engaging play features for young children under 5, and places for carers to sit and talk

Local playable space: a landscaped space with landscaping and equipment so that children aged 0 to 11 can play and be physically active and they and their carers can sit and talk

Neighbourhood playable space: A varied natural space with secluded and open areas, landscaping and equipment so that children aged 0 to 11 can play and be physically active and they and their carers can sit and talk, with some youth facilities for young people over 11

Youth space: A social space for young people aged 12 + to meet, hang out and take part in informal sport or physical recreational activities.

Non-dedicated play space

The general public realm – streets, estates and open space, especially in residential neighbourhoods, is probably the most commonly accessed environment for children's play and yet rarely designed for it.



Pearson's Park (Southwark, London)
Credit: FHAPLay

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In a densely developed, highly urbanised city like London, safe and stimulating play facilities are essential for a child's well-being, health and future development. Ensuring this is taken into account in planning and development through the London Plan has been a significant achievement of the London planning system, and will become of increasing importance with the emphasis in the new London Plan on encouraging lifetime neighbourhoods meeting the needs of all Londoners, at every stage of their lives.
 - 1.2 London is home to 1.85 million children and young people under the age of 18. London's 0 – 18 population is projected to increase by over 205,000 over the next ten years. Increased provision of play and informal recreation will be required to meet these needs and the needs of the existing population.
 - 1.3 Children and young people need free, inclusive and accessible spaces offering high-quality play and informal recreation opportunities in child-friendly neighbourhood environments. Policy 3.6 of the London Plan seeks to ensure that all children and young people have access to such provision. The challenge facing boroughs and their partners in play provision will be to find opportunities to retain and increase the provision of play and informal recreation, particularly in housing developments and to make planning for play and young people's informal recreation more responsive to needs, improving the quality, range and accessibility of provision.
 - 1.4 In London, where space is increasingly at a premium, planners, developers and designers will need to take an approach recognising the ways that children and young people use different types of public space, and that allows for flexible use of spaces so that many different user groups can enjoy them. Planners, developers, designers and architects should promote a culture that accommodates the presence of children in the built environment, encouraging playable spaces and making London a child friendly city. This draft Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) has been prepared in response to these challenges.
 - 1.5 This draft Supplementary Planning Guidance relates to the implementation of London Plan Policy 3.6 but also a range of policies on shaping neighbourhoods (see Chapter 7 of the London Plan and Figure 1.1 below) and provides the opportunity for more detailed guidance that cannot be covered in the Plan. It provides benchmark standards that were developed for the Mayor's SPG on Providing for Children and Young People's Play and Informal Recreation in 2008, and in the light of consultation with London boroughs, play specialists and designers, builds on the experience of implementing that guidance. The benchmark standards in the draft SPG are intended to provide a tool for assisting in the development of local standards and to be flexible enough to meet the varying needs of children and young people (of different age groups or abilities) across London, taking into account differences in local circumstances.
-

1.6 The requirements for play and informal recreation space provision for children and young people given in the draft SPG are intended to:

- introduce the concept of lifetime neighbourhoods and the role playable spaces have in creating these neighbourhoods;
- assist in identifying existing and future needs for play provision and how these could be accommodated;
- provide guidance and a tool to calculate the requirement for play which can be easily applied to housing proposals and a framework to ensure adequate on- and off-site provision is made to meet the demand created by the development;
- address issues of accessibility to new and existing facilities and the critical issue of site location;
- take into account public spaces such as parks and open spaces that offer good informal play opportunities and transform them into multifunctional spaces that meets the needs of different people at the same time;
- encourage and make the case for more innovative approaches to play provision in terms of facilities, location, accessibility, design (including use of natural features) and management;
- encourage schools to open their facilities such as playgrounds and

sports facilities to the public;

- provide best practice guidance on how to use resources cost-effectively and secure adequate revenue streams for maintenance and upkeep including developer contributions and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL);
- encourage the review of play strategies; and
- provide inspiring design examples of sustainable play spaces in dense urban environments.

1.7 This draft SPG does not cover sports facilities in detail. It will be dealt with in the Shaping Neighbourhoods SPG (see Figure 1.1 below)

1.8 While this Supplementary Planning Guidance does not have the same formal development plan status as the London Plan policies, it will be prepared in accordance with the requirements set out in Government Office for London Circular 1/2008 (in particular regarding consultation and formal approval by the Mayor), and it will be a material consideration in drawing up development plan documents and taking planning decisions.

POLICY 3.6: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAY AND INFORMAL RECREATION FACILITIES

Strategic

- A The Mayor and appropriate organisations should ensure that all children and young people have safe access to good quality, well-designed, secure and stimulating play and informal recreation provision, incorporating trees and greenery wherever possible.

Planning decisions

- B Development proposals that include housing should make provision for play and informal recreation, based on the expected child population generated by the scheme and an assessment of future needs. The Mayor's Supplementary Planning Guidance *Providing for Children and Young People's Play and Informal Recreation* sets out guidance to assist in this process.

LDF preparation

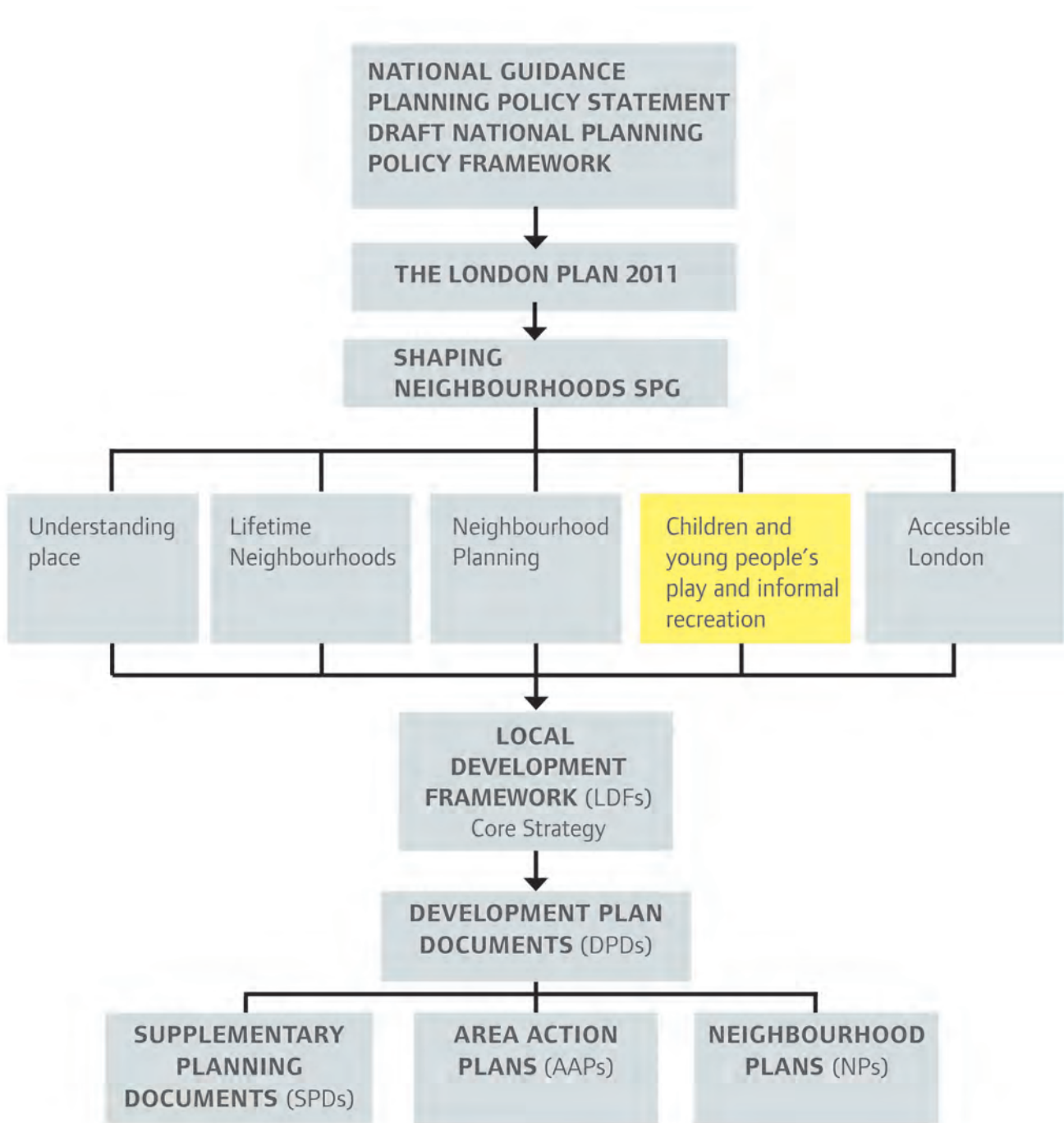
- C Boroughs should:
 - a undertake audits of existing play and informal recreation provision and assessments of need in their areas, considering the qualitative, quantitative and accessibility elements of play and informal

recreation facilities

- b produce strategies on play and informal recreation supported by LDF policies to improve access, safety and opportunity for all children and young people in their area.

- 1.8 This draft Supplementary Planning Guidance is directed at local authority planners, developers, community groups and a range of consultants (including landscape architects and urban designers) who all have roles in ensuring the implementation of the objectives set out in this Guidance. Local authorities have the responsibility of ensuring robust play strategies and establishing the overall context for implementation of the Supplementary Planning Guidance, as well as detailed roles in determining requirements for specific sites. Developers and consultants are largely responsible for the delivery of child-friendly developments and public spaces, and they must ensure adequate size, design and access to new and improved play and informal recreation areas. The SPG will also provide guidance for neighbourhood forums and local communities in shaping their Neighbourhood Plans.

Figure 1.1 Planning Policy Framework





William Patten Primary School
(Stoke Newington, London)
Credit: FHAPLay

CHAPTER TWO

POLICY CONTEXT

NATIONAL

- 2.1 Planning Policy Guidance (PPG17) Open Space, Sport and Recreation (2002) addresses the needs for different types of open spaces. The guidance recognises that the provision of open space assists the regeneration and enhancement of the physical environment and supports the encouragement of healthy lifestyles. PPG17 encourages local planning authorities to develop local standards relating to quantity, quality and accessibility.
- 2.2 Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3) Housing (June 2011) highlights the commitment to high quality design of new housing development and the importance of providing for and enabling good access to, play and informal recreation space.
- 2.3 The Government is proposing to replace the existing Planning Policy Statements and Guidance with a new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which has been published for consultation. In the draft NPPF, the Government sets its objective to create strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by creating good quality built environments, with accessible local services that reflect community needs and support well-being.

LONDON PLAN POLICIES

- 2.4 The London Plan includes a specific policy on the provision of play and informal recreation facilities (Policy 3.16). A range of other policies, such as Policy 3.16 on the protection and enhancement of social

infrastructure, Policy 7.1 on the creation of lifetime neighbourhoods and Policy 7.18 on the protection of local open space also deal with play. The range of London Plan policies related to play are introduced below.

Policy 3.6: Children and Young People's Play and Informal Recreation Facilities

- 2.5 Policy 3.6 identifies the requirement for the provision of play and informal recreation within London as well as the need for London boroughs to undertake audits of existing play and informal recreation provision and assessment of needs in their areas. The policy also encourages boroughs to produce strategies on play and informal recreation to improve access, safety and opportunity for all children and young people in their area. This Supplementary Planning Guidance provides more detailed advice to assist implementation of this policy.
- 2.6 The Plan raises the importance of providing for safe and stimulating play facilities for children's well-being and future development, as well as for preventing health problems such as obesity. This should be addressed in Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) by providing policies on play provision, including the need for high quality design. Through the development of play strategies, boroughs should ensure the integration of play provision into overall open space strategies.
- 2.7 The Plan states that new development including housing should make provision for play space. This should normally be

made on-site, and be in accordance with LDF play policies for the area. Where development is to be phased, there should be early implementation of the play space. Off-site provision, including the creation of new facilities, improvements to existing provision, and/or an appropriate financial contribution towards this provision may be acceptable where it can be demonstrated that it fully satisfies the needs of the development whilst continuing to meet the needs of existing residents.

Policy 3.16: Protection and Enhancement of Social Infrastructure

- 2.8 Play is covered in Policy 3.16 as an integral part of social infrastructure. The policy supports the provision of social infrastructure and encourages boroughs to regularly assess the need for social infrastructure in local and strategic needs assessment to ensure that adequate social infrastructure provision is made or enhanced to meet the needs of the community. Development proposals which provide for those infrastructure will be supported in light of the above needs assessments and their loss resisted. Facilities should be accessible to all sections of the community and be located within easy reach by walking, cycling and public transport. Wherever possible, the multiple use of premises should be encouraged.

Policy 7.18: Protecting local open space and addressing local deficiency

- 2.9 Policy 7.18 supports the creation of new open space in London and includes a public open space categorisation table (Table 2.1) that provides a benchmark for boroughs to assess their own provision for the different categories of open space found throughout London. The table categorises spaces according to their size and sets out a maximum desirable distance that Londoners should travel in order to access each category of open space. The standards can be used to highlight areas of open space deficiency and facilitate cross-borough planning and management of open space. The public open space hierarchy does not specify play provision for children and young people but play and informal recreation opportunities can be found in each category of open space according to size and characteristics.

Table 2.1 London's public open space categorisation

Open space categorisation	Size guideline	Distances from homes
Regional Parks Large areas, corridors or networks of open space, the majority of which will be publicly accessible and provide a range of facilities and features offering recreational, ecological, landscape, cultural or green infrastructure benefits. Offer a combination of facilities and features that are unique within London, are readily accessible by public transport and are managed to meet best practice quality standards.	400 hectares	3.2 to 8 kilometres
Metropolitan Parks Large areas of open space that provide a similar range of benefits to Regional Parks and offer a combination of facilities and features at the sub-regional level, are readily accessible by public transport and are managed to meet best practice quality standards.	60 hectares	3.2 kilometres
District Parks Large areas of open space that provide a landscape setting with a variety of natural features providing for a wide range of activities, including outdoor sports facilities and playing fields, children's play for different age groups and informal recreation pursuits.	20 hectares	1.2 kilometres
Local Parks and Open Spaces Providing for court games, children's play, sitting-out areas and nature conservation areas.	2 hectares	400 metres
Small Open Spaces Gardens, sitting-out areas, children's play spaces or other areas of a specialist nature, including nature conservation areas.	Under 2 hectares	Less than 400 metres
Pocket Parks Small areas of open space that provide natural surfaces and shaded areas for informal play and passive recreation that sometimes have seating and play equipment.	Under 0.4ha	Less than 400 metres
Linear Open Spaces Open spaces and towpaths alongside the Thames, canals and other waterways; paths; disused railways; nature conservation areas; and other routes that provide opportunities for informal recreation. Often characterised by features or attractive areas which are not fully accessible to the public but contribute to the enjoyment of the space.	Variable	Wherever feasible

Source: GLA, London Plan 2011

Policy 7.1: Building London's neighbourhoods and communities

2.10 Play also has a role in contributing to creating lifetime neighbourhoods which are dealt with in Policy 7.1. Lifetime neighbourhoods are places where people live in a good quality environment, in

an active and supportive community, with the best possible access to services, infrastructure and public transport at all stages of their lives. Their neighbourhoods should provide a character that is easy to understand and relate to.

2.11 Development should be designed so that

the layout, tenure and mix of uses interface with surrounding land and improve people's access to social and community infrastructure, the Blue Ribbon Network, local shops, employment opportunities, commercial services and public transport. Development should enable people to live healthy and active lives; should maximise the opportunity for community diversity, inclusion and cohesion; and should contribute to people's sense of place, safety and security. Places of work, leisure, streets, neighbourhoods, parks and open spaces should be designed to meet the needs of the community at all stages of people's lives, and should meet the principles of lifetime neighbourhoods. The design of spaces should help reinforce or enhance the character, legibility, permeability and accessibility of the neighbourhood. Boroughs should prepare plans to ensure infrastructure and services will be delivered to meet the needs of existing and new development. They should work with their local communities to set goals for their neighbourhoods and strategies for achieving them. Cross-borough working is encouraged where appropriate. The Mayor will be preparing guidance to assist the implementation of the lifetime neighbourhoods later in 2012.

Policy 7.2: An Inclusive environment

2.12 Policy 7.2 requires that all development in London achieve the highest standards of accessible and inclusive design. The design and access statement submitted with development proposals should explain how, following engagement with relevant user groups, the principle of inclusive

design have been integrated into the proposed development, whether best practice guidance such as British Standard BS 8300:2009 have been complied with, and how inclusion will be maintained and managed.

Policy 7.5: Public Realm

2.13 Policy 7.5 supports the development of high quality public spaces in London by ensuring that landscape treatment, street furniture and infrastructure in the public realm are of the highest quality and have a clear purpose. It encourages opportunities for the integration of high quality public art and maximises opportunities for greening. Development should incorporate local social infrastructure such as public toilets, drinking fountains and seating as well as play spaces so that the environment is inclusive and it allows people to meet, congregate and socialise as well as providing opportunities for quiet enjoyment.

Other London Plan Policies

2.14 Other relevant London Plan policies and SPGs which should be considered in the development of policy and consideration of proposals in the provision of play and informal recreation include:

Policy 2.18 Green Infrastructure: The Policy highlights the role of London's network of green infrastructure in promoting sport and recreation and the social benefits that promote individual and community health and well-being

Policy 3.1 Ensuring Equal Life Chances

for All: The Policy aims to ensure that the need of Londoners for facilities and services are met to ensure equal access to opportunities for all.

Policy 3.5 Quality and Design of housing development:

The Policy introduces a presumption against development on back gardens or other private residential gardens. This may expand opportunities for play.

Policy 3.7 Large residential

developments: Sites over 5 hectares or capable of accommodating more than 500 dwellings should be progressed through an appropriate plan-led process to coordinate provision of social infrastructure.

Policy 3.8 Housing Choice requires developments to provide a range of housing sizes and types, including family housing. This will offer greater choice for families.

Policy 3.19 Sports Facilities seeks to support developments which increase provision of sports and recreation facilities and increase healthy lifestyles

Policy 6.9 Cycling seeks to encourage cycling and safe and convenient direct routes to key uses such as schools or play areas.

Policy 6.10 Walking seeks to encourage walking in a high quality pedestrian and street environment and accessible, safe and convenient direct routes to key uses such as play areas.

Policy 7.4 Local Character:

Policy supports the development of places that improve or build on the local character of the area.

MAYOR'S STRATEGIES AND SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

2.15 Play and informal recreation is also addressed in a number of the Mayor's cross-cutting strategies and initiatives. The overarching strategy is set out in *Young Londoners - Successful Futures*¹ but a number of other strategies are relevant, including the Mayor's Transport, Sport², Health Inequalities and Culture strategies. The Mayor's Great Outdoors initiative aims to upgrade public spaces in London, promoting the wide ranging benefits of open space and sets out the need to make London a more child-friendly city, including opportunities to make streets safer for children, the creation of new and diverse opportunities for play and places for young people, and the promotion of open space as a cultural resource for London. The London Housing Design Guide³ (chapter 1.2), published by the Mayor in 2010, and the draft Housing SPG⁴ both reflect the needs of children and young people in setting out design of open spaces, internal space standards and environmental requirements for housing in London. The draft All London Green Grid

1 Mayor of London. *Young Londoners - Successful Futures: The Mayor's renewed agenda for children and young people*. GLA, July 2010

2 Mayor of London. *A Sporting Future for London*. GLA, April 2009

3 Mayor of London. *London Housing Design Guidance (LHDG)*. LDA, 2010

4 Mayor of London. *Draft Housing SPG*. GLA, December 2011

(ALGG)⁵ promotes the creation of a high quality multifunctional green infrastructure network that maximizes the opportunities for improving quality of life. The network includes open spaces (including both publicly accessible and private land, such as parks, recreation grounds, playing fields, amenity space and children's play areas), corridors and the links in between, of varying size and character. It promotes the provision, protection and improvement of sports facilities, including playing fields, as well as encouraging the use of parks, play facilities and other green spaces to encouraging more active lifestyles and improved mental well-being.

- 2.16 Other Supplementary Planning Guidance such as the overarching Shaping Neighbourhoods SPG that will pull together a number of existing reviewed SPGs, Best Practice Guides (BPG) and new documents, will provide advice and guidance on a number of play connected issues, in particular the implementation of Policy 7.1 Building London's Neighbourhoods and Communities (see Figure 1.1).

REVIEW OF PLAY STRATEGIES

- 2.17 The 33 London boroughs now all have their own play strategies. These inform each boroughs' play policies. They provide comprehensive guidance on play provision including quantitative and qualitative deficiencies in provision relative to future need as well as mechanisms to address these. It is important that they are kept
- under review and are regularly updated to reflect the changing needs of the community and its children, in consultation with children and young people.
- 2.18 Play strategies should encompass all categories of play space and informal recreation areas, including provision within residential areas and should identify opportunities to improve and upgrade provision and access to it in accordance with this supplementary planning guidance. Deficiencies in provision should be addressed in the planning of new provision to meet the needs of existing and new communities. This will generally be associated with new residential development but account should also be taken of needs generated in other places with high child populations such as town centres.
- 2.19 The review of play strategies should be viewed in the context of the community strategy and local development framework and other related corporate strategies covering areas such as regeneration, health, culture, education and crime and disorder as well as open space. Local open space strategies for instance can have a complementary role in meeting the objectives of the play strategies, in the sense that they present an opportunity to embed play within open spaces and address some of the deficiencies in play provision. Play strategies may be useful in expanding further on certain types of open spaces or uses within open spaces. The Mayor's Best Practice Guidance on Open

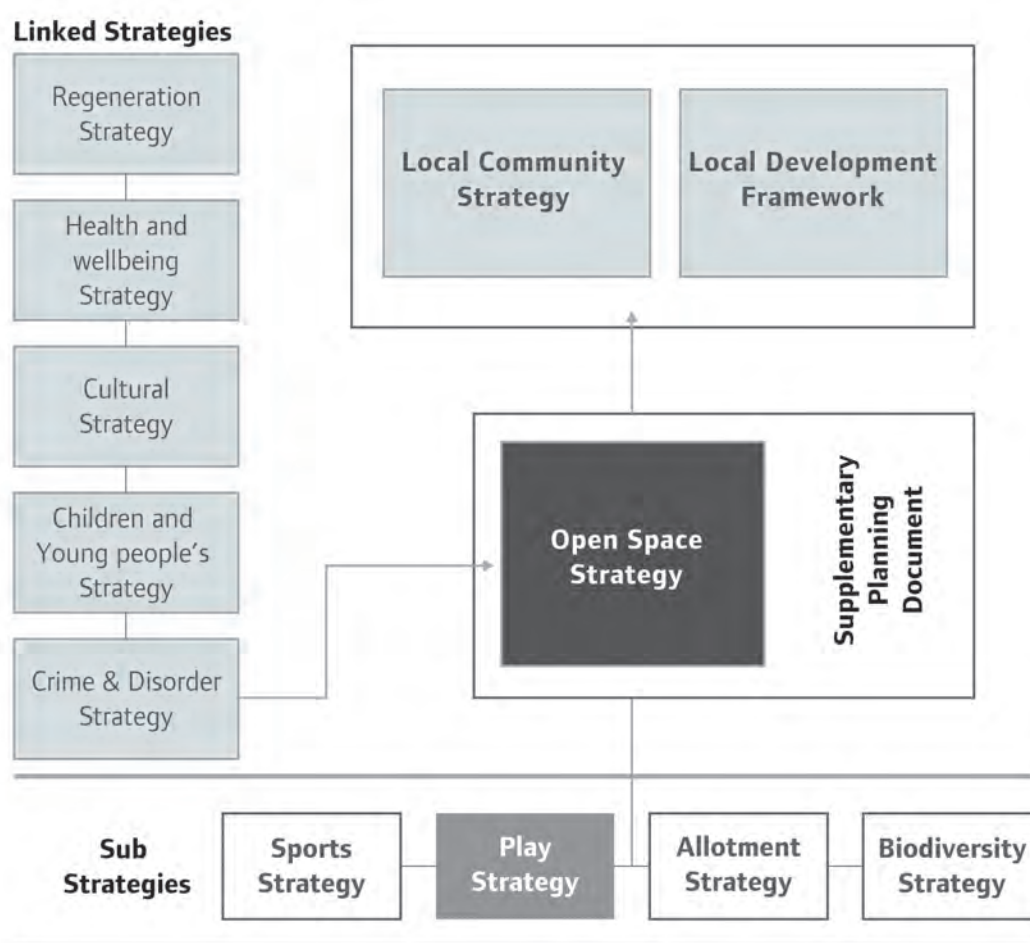
⁵ Mayor of London. Draft All London Green Grid SPG. GLA, November 2011

Space Strategies⁶ provides advice on how to prepare an open space strategy.

2.20 Figure 2.2 below shows the relationship between the different corporate strategies and assessments. Play strategies should make reference to a range of corporate strategies within a local authority.

2.21 To assist London boroughs with the development of play strategies, the Mayor published in 2005 a Guide to Preparing Play Strategies.⁷ The Mayor's guide is still useful for methodologies and general advice but has now been superseded to some extent by Planning for Play⁸ from Play England. London boroughs may want

Figure 2.2 Relationship of play strategy to other strategies



⁶ Mayor of London and Cabi Space. Best Practice Guidance Open Space Strategies, 2009

⁷ <http://www.playscotland.org/assets/Documents/playstrategy.pdf>

⁸ Planning for Play. Guidance on the development and Implementation of a local play strategy. Play England, March 2006 http://www.playengland.org.uk/media/120480/planning_for_play.pdf

to refer to this guidance when reviewing their play strategies.

areas of a borough to reflect the needs of different neighbourhoods.

- 2.22 When reviewing their play strategies, boroughs should carry out an audit of current provision. A series of steps on how to identify, map and audit current provision is proposed in Chapter 4A.

DEVELOPING LOCAL BENCHMARK STANDARDS

- 2.23 It is recommended that boroughs develop local benchmark standards in the context of their play and open space strategies, taking into account their local circumstances. The link between benchmark standards and local play strategies is essential, as the standards can be applied most effectively when boroughs have an understanding of the state of play and informal recreation provision in the area locally.
- 2.24 The benchmark standards provided in this draft guidance are flexible enough to meet the varying needs of children and young people across London and should be used as a reference to guide boroughs in the development of their own local benchmarks. This is to promote a consistent approach across London and to ensure that opportunities for improving existing provision and securing high quality new play provision to meet the needs of children and young people are maximised. However, standards for local play provision should be adapted to reflect local needs, taking into account children's needs and the socio-economic context of the area. In some cases, it may be appropriate to adopt different thresholds for different sub-



Kilburn Grange Park Adventure
Playground and Playcentre
(Camden, London)
Credit: Erect architecture

CHAPTER THREE

WHAT MAKES A GOOD PLACE FOR PLAY?

3.1 Good places to play are an integral part of the creation of lifetime neighbourhoods (Policy 7.1). These are neighbourhoods where access to places to meet and relax, green and open spaces, cultural facilities, local shops, basic amenities and public transport are within easy reach of homes, and where facilities such as public toilets and seating consciously planned into proposals at the outset help to build cohesive, successful and sustainable communities. They are places where the needs of communities are met at all stages of their lives. This SPG gives guidance on the role that playable spaces can have in creating these neighbourhoods.

3.2 A good place for play does not happen by accident. Success is a matter of securing enough physical space in the right locations, understanding user requirements, designing and creating spaces that attract and engage children and young people, and ensuring appropriate long-term management and maintenance.

3.3 A good playable space is a place where children and young people have a safe access to physically accessible and inclusive play spaces that are stimulating and fun for everyone and where there are numerous opportunities for play in the neighbourhood. A good place to play needs a number of key elements:

- space
- location and accessibility
- an environment that encourages

healthy lifestyles

- inclusion
- diversity in lifetime neighbourhoods
- playable space in a child-friendly city
- access to nature
- safety and security
- management and maintenance.

SPACE

3.4 If children and young people are to have the chance to play out in the fresh air, to be physically active and to meet with friends and peers, then they need free access to out of doors space. The first step to securing this is ensuring there is sufficient physical space in the neighbourhoods where children live. The benchmark standards in this draft guidance provide a quantitative standard, which closely reflects the London situation. There is a case for linking the amount of space devoted to play to the numbers of children living, or expected to be living, in a proposed development. A methodology to calculate the number of children that a housing development will generate is proposed in Chapter 4. Play space should be properly integrated into new development and the existing context.

3.5 In addition to the provision of play and informal recreation space, it is important to create more child-friendly neighbourhoods. This involves making different types of

CASE STUDY - EVELYN COURT (HACKNEY, LONDON)



See also image on front cover. Evelyn Court, a high-density housing estate in Hackney, lacked usable communal space. An existing green buffer space between the estate and the main road was fenced off and inaccessible and the small existing playground only catered for very young children and was in dire need of an upgrade. The architect's objective for the public space design was to open up the existing green space for users of all ages by creating playable connections, which made use of the existing change in level. The design comprises of a series of sliced mounds of differing characters. The mounds are constructed out of retained solid earth, timber or climbing nets. They offer exciting spaces on top, underneath and in-between for both play and socialising. These spaces are as valued by the children as the more traditional pieces of play equipment. They provide incentive to imaginatively explore, inhabit and take ownership of the playground. The design uses oak railway sleepers throughout, is hardwearing and able to withstand the intensive use. (Project - Erect architecture, Photo credit - James Whitaker)

public space and the whole of the public realm safe and 'playable' or in other words welcoming and enjoyable for children and young people. (see section on Playable space in a child friendly city)

London Plan Policy signpost: 3.1, 3.2, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.16, 7.1, 7.5

IMPLEMENTATION POINT 1

Development proposals that include housing should make provision for play and informal recreation, based on the expected child population generated by the scheme and an assessment of future needs (see chapter 4).

Boroughs should use the benchmark standards provided in this draft guidance to secure places to play.

Public spaces and the public realm should be designed and managed so as to make engaging offers to a wide range of potential users

LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

3.6 Location is partly a matter of physical proximity to children's homes, to their schools and to other places where they spend their time. Studies show dramatic decreases in children's independent mobility and this has affected their access to play opportunities. Young children are dependent on their parents or carers to get to and from places for play. Therefore, it is important that play spaces are within easy walking and pram-pushing distance if they are to be regularly used. They should be accessible to all section of local communities and be located within easy reach by walking, cycling and public transport. As children grow up, their 'home territory' grows and they have more freedom to get around on their own. They will be able and willing to travel further to get to places where they can meet and play.

3.7 Well-located places for play are ones that are well-connected with the wider built environment. Location is critical in generating a sense of social safety and security. This means that facilities should be close to a footpath network, within public open spaces, adjacent to well-used public buildings (i.e. shops, school) or homes or well-used pedestrian, cycling or bus routes) to allow for a level of informal community supervision. They should not be isolated by large expanses of open space, or severed from the rest of a neighbourhood by physical barriers such as busy roads or railway lines. Access can also be limited by social divisions and social risks, such as areas that are known or widely perceived to be a focus for street crime or harassment. Older young people tend to prefer a degree of separation from others, so spaces for them can be more removed. They still need to be easily accessible and visible within neighbourhoods, not tucked away out of sight. In new developments, the use of roofs and terraces may provide an alternative to ground floor open space where they are large enough and indoor space may be appropriate for some facilities for older children/ young people. It is recommended that housing development proposals refer to the distance benchmarks provided in this guidance and identify the routes to the proposed play areas to support planning applications (see Chapter 4).

IMPLEMENTATION POINT 2

Play space should be accessible to all sections of the community (including disabled people and their parents or carers) and be located within easy reach by walking, cycling and public transport.

Development proposals that include housing should make provision for play and informal recreation based on table 4.4 on accessibility to play space.

London Plan Policy signpost: 3.6, 3.16, 6.10, 6.9, 7.2, 7.1, 7.3

AN ENVIRONMENT THAT ENCOURAGES HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

“All children and young people should engage in moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity for at least 60 minutes and up to several hours every day.”

Start Active, Stay Active report¹

- 3.8 Regular participation in physical activity among children and young people provides important health benefits for them such as reduction of psychological distress and elimination of excess fat. The National Child Measurement Programme whereby every child in the UK gets measured on entering and leaving primary school

highlights that obesity prevalence of children in London is 11.6% for reception and 21.8% for year 6. The percentage of obese children in year 6 is nearly double that of reception. Links also exist between deprivation (as measured by the 2007 IMD score), ethnic groups and obesity prevalence in children; with obesity prevalence increasing as the socio-economic deprivation increases and higher obesity prevalence in both years in the ethnic groups ‘Asian or Asian British’, ‘Any Other Ethnic Group’, ‘Black or Black British’ and ‘Mixed.’

- 3.9 To enable children and young people to live healthy and active lives, they should evolve in environments of quality that are safe and offer them access to opportunities to participate in physical activities that are appropriate for their age and stage of development. This ranges from safe routes for active travel to school, safe access to parks and quality play spaces for outdoor play, dedicated play centres for indoor play, access to schools and colleges with good playground provision, and physical education activities, access to sports infrastructure such as playing pitches, dance clubs and swimming pools where they can participate in sports.
- 3.10 A study commissioned by NHS Ashton, Leigh and Wigan, through the Heart of Wigan Partnership drawn the same conclusion as countless others: *‘Investment in parks and green spaces should be seen as an investment in public health’*. The potential health benefits of outdoor play in natural settings include: positive attitudes towards physical activity; activation of

¹ Start Active, Stay Active: A report on physical activity from the four home countries’ Chief Medical Officers

higher cognitive processes and healthy brain development; and promotion of and improved healthy wellbeing throughout the life course.² Interaction with other children and the opportunity to 'make friends' also contribute to the good health of children.

IMPLEMENTATION POINT 3

Play spaces and their urban environment should be designed to promote active life-styles.

London Plan Policy signpost: 3.2, 3.6, 3.19, 7.18

URBAN GYM



Access to free, accessible outdoor fitness opportunities can engage children from 14 and above to make real physical and mental health and fitness gains in an outdoor environment. (Association of Play Industries (API))

CASE STUDY - SUSTRANS' GUIDE 'ROUTES TO PLAY'¹



The guide makes some recommendations on ensuring children and young people can play actively and travel independently around the areas in which they live. Stimulating lightly trafficked routes for instance with artworks, paint on the path's surface and natural play features can offer excellent opportunities for spontaneous and creative play and can encourage children to walk to school, the park, shops or visit friends. Transport for London's Legible London initiative also aims to simplify wayfinding and improve access to play spaces for people on foot.

1 Routes to play: A guide for Local Authorities: How to ensure children and young people can get to play spaces actively and independently, Sustrans, August 2009 http://www.sustrans.org.uk/assets/files/AT/APTO/Routes_to_play.pdf

INCLUSION

3.11 Disabled children and young people have the right to play and be included in their local communities but this will only be achieved if the barriers to accessible play are identified and overcome. The guidance 'Playing Outdoors? Disabled children's views of play pathfinder and playbuilder play spaces'³ provides an overview of disabled children's perceptions of play spaces. It identified access into and around play spaces as one of the most significant barriers that excludes disabled children from play spaces. The existence of steps, the lack of dropped kerbs or wide smooth level paths around and to play equipment, the lack of accessible toilets and the lack of parking, often prevents disabled children and their families from getting into and using play spaces.

3.12 The needs of disabled children should be considered at the beginning of the planning and design process for new or refurbished play spaces. The best way to achieve this is by consulting disabled children and their families at the beginning of the development process so that their needs are considered and embedded from the start. Following the development of the National Play Strategy and the play pathfinder and playbuilder projects there are now a number of examples of good practice and useful information on how this can be achieved. The appendix of this guidance provides examples from KIDS' work on creating an inclusive world for disabled children. KIDS recommend

that all children should be able to access equipment and play opportunities that are exciting and fun and offer various levels of challenges. Sensory experiences as well as the use of equipment that can be used in different ways by children at different stages of development and with differing levels of ability should be encouraged.

IMPLEMENTATION POINT 4

To ensure that all play spaces and routes to play space are accessible to, and usable by, disabled children and disabled parents local authorities should be actively identifying and addressing the shortage of play provision for disabled children in their areas. New proposals should provide inclusive play space and equipment by meeting the highest standards of accessible and inclusive design.

London Plan Policy signpost: 3.1, 3.6, 7.1, 7.2

CASE STUDY - INCLUSIVE LANDSCAPE DESIGN SPG

Islington Council in their Inclusive Landscape Design SPG published in January 2010 provide comprehensive guidance on delivering inclusive design in a historic urban setting which includes parks, open spaces, tow paths, squares and residential areas, adventure playgrounds and hidden oasis. Illustrated with photos of good and bad examples this SPG fills a gap in inclusive design advice helping to ensure that planning applications for public realm and landscape projects implement the principles of inclusive design. See http://www.islington.gov.uk/DownloadableDocuments/Environment/Pdf/ldf_pa

³ 'Playing Outdoors? Disabled children's views of play pathfinder and playbuilder play spaces' KIDS 2010

CASE STUDY - NORWOOD PARK WATERPLAY (LAMBETH, LONDON)



The new water play area in Norwood Park is an extension to an existing equipment based playground located on the top of the hill. The clients' brief was to create a natural, inclusive play landscape offering water and sand play specifically catering for children with special needs and their families and carers. The design of two gently sloping mounds linked with a timber bridge exaggerates the existing hilltop location. The mounds embrace a generous, partly sand-filled sculpted valley and shelter it from the prevailing winds. Purpose designed play structures, climbing features and sand and water play elements are embedded in this landscape to provide a multi-level, all-weather play offer. Playing with mud, transporting, shaping and building with sand and water are basic needs, which bring together all age groups. The water and sand play offers children the opportunity to engage in 'proper' work and has some of the appeal of a real building site encouraging creative and co-operative play by enabling children to work together and engage in self-initiated 'projects' and games. (Project - Erect architecture, Photo credit - James Whitaker)

See also case study Stephen Hawking's Special School on PAGE 39 and Appendix 3 on Inclusion

DIVERSITY IN LIFETIME NEIGHBOURHOODS

3.13 In a diverse city like London, children have different needs for play; those can vary depending on their age, sex, ethnic origins, religion and level of ability. To

ensure all children have equal access to play opportunities, it is important that those needs are identified and that places are tailored to ensure these needs are effectively met. Boroughs, developers and designers should identify the needs

CASE STUDY - CLAPTON COMMON PLAYGROUND (HACKNEY, LONDON)



The design was developed to accommodate the wishes of the predominantly Hasidic Jewish community, specifically to avoid water and sand, to provide space for buggies and a generous amount of seating. A boundary for the under 5s area was designed to meet the requirements of the users. To maximise the available space in a relatively small site, the boundary incorporated seating, perching, balancing and other play opportunities. Fallen trees (that are an orthodox icon) and playhouses were located and designed to be playable from the inside and outside of the play area. (Project - Erect architecture, Photo credit - Sean Pollock)

of children and their families by engaging with them at the earliest opportunity (see chapter 5 Consultation).

According to a Play England survey, 81% of adults believe children playing outside helps to improve community spirit

3.14 Play spaces can be focal points for local communities and have a key role in encouraging social interaction in local communities and promoting health and wellbeing. Children playing outside their homes can result in neighbours getting to know each other better and build trust between local residents. It can enable the development of social networks and a sense of community belonging. Outside dedicated play spaces, making neighbourhoods with playable environments can benefit people of all ages in the neighbourhood. They can provide for places for quiet enjoyment as well as for places to be active. Interactions between people of different ages in parks and public spaces can contribute to building trust and understanding and address any negative perceptions or tensions between young people and other members of the community alike.

3.15 Boroughs should support the development of networks within/between families and the wider community to help foster stronger relationships within the neighbourhood, build solutions to issues that concern the community and give a greater sense of belonging to the neighbourhood. This will contribute to achieving the lifetime neighbourhood principles promoted in Policy 7.1

3.16 A lifetime neighbourhood is also a place that people relate to and feel they belong to. The design of play space should be site-specific to create a sense of place and reflect the character of the local area. Emphasis should be placed on the creation of family friendly environments, and requirements such as toilets, baby-changing facilities and seating should be provided to make the neighbourhood accessible to all (this includes parents, carers and grandparents accompanying children). The type of play provision will depend on the local needs and should be appropriate to the size and characteristics of the surrounding areas. See Table x on typology of provision.

CASE STUDY - PLAY STREET LONDON

A growing movement in the play sector, in particular from London Play, is the re-establishment of playable streets. The idea of the 'Play Street programme' consists of opening up quiet residential streets on Sundays with traffic to be directed elsewhere, giving children the opportunity to use their street as a playground under the watch of parents and other residents living in the area. Anecdotal evidence has shown that children playing outside their homes has resulted in neighbours getting to know each other better and anti-social behaviour subsiding where residents, including teenagers, feel they live on a happier street as result of the programme.

London Plan Policy signpost: 3.1, 3.2, 3.6, 3.16, 7.1, 7.4

CLIMBING TREE (CAMDEN, LONDON)



The climbing tree is located in the small green space of Leighton Crescent, Camden. The scheme turns the tree as play opportunity on its head whilst references the architectural language of the conservation area. (Project and photo - Muf)

PLAYABLE SPACE IN A CHILD FRIENDLY CITY

3.17 For children and young people, the key feature of a successful space for play is its 'playability.' A playable space is one where children's active play is a legitimate use of the space (see glossary). Playable space typically includes some design elements that have 'play value': they act as a sign or signal to children and young people that the space is intended for their play. Fixed equipment obviously has play value, but so do other elements such as informal recreation facilities or playful landscaping features.



No Ball Games (Banksy)

3.18 In London, where space is at a premium, public space, streets, pavements, walkways and various forms of public open space have the potential to be treated as incidental spaces for play. The creation of incidental playable spaces are dependent on the creative use of the public realm to provide enjoyment and discovery for children and young people for example through the creation of landscaping and high quality public art. Spaces can also,

with good design, be multifunctional, offering a range of leisure and recreation opportunities for users of all ages, as well as being playable. The playable space typology in Chapter 4 builds on the multifunctional concept of 'playable' play and defines a hierarchy of play provision.



Video: <http://vimeo.com/25771436>



Skatepark in Gateshead in the middle of a large roundabout and underneath a flyover (Photo credit - phw26)

HAMMARBY SJOSTAD RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT (STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN)

Enjoyable Water Features For All



Photo credit - Tim Gill

CASE STUDY - PARKOUR: ACTIVE IN THE CITY



Increasingly popular in the sporting/play world is the French sport of Parkour and Free Running. Both sports rely upon carrying out graceful, efficient movements to navigate obstacles, particularly in the urban environment, and with their combination of jumping, running and climbing; both sports are a great way to stay in shape. Several major play companies have already been invited to produce Parkour training facilities and local authorities are hearing more and more requests from communities for places. With some companies exploring the possibilities of using barcode scanning so Parkour enthusiasts can download videos and instructions for new moves from the internet, combining the latest technology with feats of aerial grace and athleticism (API and photo credit:JBLondon)

to create playable space in streets and other public spaces

- Playable street landscaping that includes changes of level, boulders, logs and other engaging features, in order to create incidental play opportunities
- Pedestrian and cycling routes, including design features like cycle parking and dropped kerbs where appropriate, linking play spaces and informal recreation areas to housing, schools, shops and other key neighbourhood destinations to promote independent mobility
- Integration of public art as a means of enrichment and animation
- Commissioning of artists and designers to produce work within the general landscape scheme as well as prescribed play spaces.

IMPLEMENTATION POINT 5

Play spaces should be designed so they are multifunctional and offer a range of leisure and recreation opportunities for users of all ages, as well as being playable. The proposed play space typology in Table x addresses the potential for multifunctional spaces for different age groups and activities.

3.19 The measures below give example of how new developments can be thought through to improve the environment for children and young people. They include:

- DIY Street (see Chapter 5) and other highway measures, such as car parking located away from public play spaces,

London Plan Policy signpost: 3.1, 3.6, 3.16, 3.18, 7.1, 7.2, 7.5

Schools

- 3.20 School facilities and school playing fields can provide an important contribution to high quality play spaces for a range of community activities, such as pre or after school cultural and other sports activities. Children should be capable of using them outside school hours. Maximum use of schools after school hours or at weekends can contribute to reducing deficiencies in play provision, respond to the needs of working parents, provide children with greater choice for play activities as well as supporting educational attainment.
- 3.21 Physical activity/organised sport at school during the school day are also important and schools and colleges should look to make arrangements to share each others services (local on-site or off-site provision for play) when these are not fully used during school day. This may be particularly relevant for free schools that may not have sufficient space to accommodate sports facilities on site. Containers of materials and equipment (loose parts) such as the 'Play Pod' also present an opportunity to optimise the use of schools' playgrounds that cannot be physically improved to stimulate, facilitate and enhance children's play at school.

'Practical Guide for School opening their facilities to community sports.'

To be published by Sport England early 2012¹.

¹ http://www.sportengland.org/support_advice/building_schools_and_sport/accessing_school_facilities.aspx

IMPLEMENTATION POINT 6

Where possible, schools should make appropriate arrangements to open their building (play grounds and sports facilities) to the community outside school hours.

London Plan Policy signpost: 3.6, 3.18, 3.19

WILLIAM PATTEN SCHOOL (STOKE NEW-INGTON, LONDON)



Project and Photo credit - FHAPlay

ACCESS TO NATURE

One in seven children in London has not visited a green space in the last year.

Sowing the Seeds, London Sustainable Development Commission

3.22 Two thirds of London's is covered by green spaces (including gardens) or water,¹ and 9.8% is designated as Metropolitan Open Land. However, many children in London, in particular from black and Minority Ethnic groups still do not have adequate access to these natural places. Children in London face additional barriers compared to those in other parts of the UK, as a result of high population densities, pressure on green space, deficiencies in green space in many areas and poorer access to private gardens. The report *'Sowing the Seeds: Reconnecting London's children with nature through play'*, commissioned by the London Sustainable Development Commission explores how children can be reconnected with nature, and the benefits that may be experienced as a result. It puts forward 12 recommendations to address the issues identified in the report and to make contact with nature a part of everyday life for more of London's children.

3.23 Access to nature is an important contributor to children's health and access to both existing and new wildlife habitats should therefore be enhanced for children. Policy 3.6 seeks to ensure all children and young people have access to play and

informal recreation incorporating trees and greenery wherever possible. The Mayor expects London's biodiversity and natural heritage to be conserved and enhanced for the benefit of current and future Londoners and trees and woodlands should be protected, maintained and enhanced. Policy 7.19 sets out criteria and procedures for identifying land of importance for London's biodiversity for protection in LDFs and identifying areas of deficiency in access to nature. If new play provision is proposed in Areas of Deficiency for Access to Nature, the design should incorporate higher quality natural landscaped areas. Care should be taken when considering formal play spaces and equipment in a Site of Importance to Nature Conservation (SINC), to avoid damaging the valued habitats. In these areas, natural features could provide a valuable experience. Policy 7.18 also encourages boroughs to identify in their open space strategies areas of public open space deficiency (see categorisation table 2.1).

Interactive GIS-based map

Savlon and Play England, in conjunction with Natural England, have launched a fully interactive GIS-based map where the public can search for and add good natural places to play, and upload comments and photos to show why they are good or need improving.

¹ Communities and Local Government. Generalised Land Use Database Statistics for England 2005, February 2007 <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/generalisedlanduse>

Map 3.1 Local park indicative deficiency area



Source: Map derived from GiGL data 2011 - © Crown Copyright and database right 2011. 100050713. All rights reserved gla 2011

IMPLEMENTATION POINT 7

LDF play policies and play strategy should establish a shared vision that all children in London have good access to sites where they can experience nature as part of their everyday lives, and have engaging everyday nature experiences in such a site, beginning in their early years.

Wherever possible, play spaces should incorporate trees and greenery.

London Plan Policy signpost: 2.18, 3.6, 7.18, 7.19, 7.21

HIGHGATE NEW TOWN PLAY SPACE STRUCTURE (ISLINGTON, LONDON).



The use of the tree and net promotes natural play. (Project - Muf, photo credit - Tim Gill)

CASE STUDY - KILBURN GRANGE PARK ADVENTURE PLAY (CAMDEN, LONDON)

See also image at start of chapter 3. The site was the remainder of a Victorian Arboretum within an existing park. The over-arching theme is playing in and around trees. The playpark consists of new landforms, landscape typologies and site-specific climbing structures built around the existing trees. These different landscape typologies, scales, uses, types of inhabitation and play as well as materials and textures have been carefully arranged to facilitate sustained play and the possibility of re-invention and –discovery. The project started with extensive user engagement, focusing on providing learning and playing opportunities and widening the perception of playability. A series of workshops introduced issues relevant to adventure, natural play and building to equip the children with tools to use and further develop their playground once the architects leave site. Sustainability was a key factor for the design and incorporated opportunities for children to learn about sustainable living. (Project - Erect architecture, photo credit:David Grandorge)

SAFETY AND SECURITY

“Children need and want to take risks when they play. Play provision aims to respond to these needs and wishes by offering children stimulating, challenging environments for exploring and developing their abilities. In doing this, play provision aims to manage the level of risk so that children are not exposed to unacceptable risks of death or serious injuries”¹
(Managing risk in play provision: summary statement, Play Safety Forum)

- 3.24 Good places for play should include a degree of physical challenge and allow managed opportunities for children and young people to take risks. There is a growing consensus that play space design has become overly influenced by fear of litigation and a subsequent drive to minimise injuries. The risk of injury cannot be eliminated in any space, and minor and easily healed injuries are part of every child's experience.
- 3.25 There is no specific legislation on play safety in the UK and there is widespread confusion about the purpose, status and content of the European standards² that apply to outdoor play equipment. To quote RoSPA's website:

[The European standards] are not... a legal requirement but represent good practice in the event of an accident claim. Their limitations should be recognised: mere compliance will not

automatically create a safe playground... They are intended to be used intelligently.

- 3.26 The primary legal requirement for providers is to undertake a 'suitable and sufficient' risk assessment in play provision. Risk assessments should strike the balance between the risks and the benefits of risks and consider trading-off risk-benefit between safety and other goals. **London Play's Managing Risk in Play Provision Implementation Guide**³ shows how play providers can replace current risk assessment practice with an approach that fully takes into account the benefits to children and young people of challenging play experiences. It provides a useful approach for those who manage spaces and settings in which children play, and for those involved in designing and maintaining them. Risk-benefit assessment focuses on making judgements and identifying measures that manage risks while securing benefits. Given children's appetite for risk-taking, one of the factors that should be considered is the likelihood that children will seek out risks elsewhere, in environments that are not controlled or designed for them, if play provision is not challenging enough. Another factor is the learning that can take place when children are exposed to, and have to learn to deal with, environmental hazards. London Play's Implementation guide explains how risk-benefit assessment can address issues such as the selection of surface type, the use of fencing and self-build structures in a particular location.

1 <http://www.playengland.org.uk/resources/managing-risk-in-play-provision-a-position-statement>

2 The new European Standards (EN 1176 and EN 1177) harmonise existing national standards (principally BS 5696, DIN 7926 and BS 7188)

3 <http://www.playengland.org.uk/resources/managing-risk-in-play-provision-implementation-guide>

HANOVER GATE (REGENT'S PARK, LONDON)



Some surfaces such as sand can attenuate impacts at a low cost. (Project and photo credit:FHAPlay)

3.27 Good design can also help to make spaces be – and feel – more secure for children and young people and their parents and carers, and less prone to misuse or vandalism. Routes to and play spaces should be legible and well-maintained. Sufficient and attractive provision for young people for instance can prevent anti-social behaviour. Teenagers that have nowhere of their own to meet are likely to adopt familiar and accessible places designed for others with inevitable results. Purpose-built, heavy duty, outdoor

seating, generally referred to as **youth shelters**, increasingly being asked for by teenagers can benefit the community as a whole as young people can get together in places that are designed for them, in suitable locations. By having a space of their own, they are also less likely to gather on young children's play equipment or become a nuisance to people, particularly elderly residents. A guide has been developed setting out **6 Steps to a successful youth shelter**. It proposes solutions to solve common objections

and meet the needs of the young people. It can be found at: http://rekk.co.uk/Downloads/6_Steps_To_A_Successful_Youth_Shelter.pdf

CASE STUDY - WEATHERING THE STORM

A trial scheme started in West Yorkshire used a temporary shelter to give young people their own place to go. Initial consultation found the community was sceptical but after 6 months, a Community Police Officer in the area, noticed that calls for anti-social behaviour on the estate had fallen by almost 50%.

Following these positive results the council lent their support to install a permanent youth shelter. The shelter aims to give young people a place to sit and “hang-out” without supervision from parents. Another scheme in the area gave children access to Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs) in the evening and at weekends, this also provided young people with the opportunity to responsible for their own spaces. Both youth shelters and better access to local facilities, and their responsible use, can help to open up a dialogue between young people and the police as well as and improving community relations. (API)

CASE STUDY - S(MUGA) MEMORIAL PARK (NEWHAM, LONDON)



A multi-use games (MUGA) area for Memorial Park: Expanding the functionality of the traditional MUGA as “social” as well as “sporty” space. The designated games area includes a more loosely defined space for informal play and sitting, enabling both the users of the games area and spectators or other users, including those hard to reach groups that are either unwilling or unable to take part in sports or formal youth schemes to interact/socialise. The design for this MUGA was based on a series of workshops held with pupils in a nearby school. (Project and photo credit - muf)

3.28 The design of play space should take into account a **changing climate**. Children and young people should be protected from risks such as exposure to the sun, hot weather or poor air quality. Measures could include the incorporation of canopy trees and shading structures/canopies to provide shade and refuges from the heat/weather. Water fountains should be provided nearby where practical as well as biodiverse vegetation or food growing opportunities to enhance the outdoor experience. Any water-based play features should be water and energy efficient. Managing Risks And Increasing Resilience: the Mayor's climate change adaptation strategy looks at who and what is vulnerable to extreme weather today, considers how climate change will affect the existing climate risks, or create new risks or opportunities in the future and provides a framework for action.

IMPLEMENTATION POINT 8

Boroughs should promote a balanced approach to managing risk in play provision. The need for children to take risks should be clearly highlighted in play strategies and play strategy reviews and should set the framework for making judgements about play provision, risks and benefits for children.

Boroughs should follow the approach provided in London Play's Managing Risk in Play Provision Implementation Guide¹ to

1 <http://www.playengland.org.uk/resources/managing-risk-in-play-provision-implementation-guide>

inform the ways in which play is provided.

Measures should be included in the design of play space to take account of the changing climate.

LONDON PLAN POLICY SIGNPOST: 3.6, 7.1, 7.3, 6.9, 6.10

CASE STUDY - STEPHEN HAWKINGS SPECIAL SCHOOL (TOWER HAMLETS, LONDON)

BEFORE



AFTER



The primary school for children with severe learning difficulties has transformed its playground from a blank grey concrete canvas with very little shade, no covered area and very little to do to an oasis of play and curiosity. A 'Slow Design' approach was taken up to develop a playground that would be accessible for all and where children would participate in meaningful activities. The whole playscape construction was spread over three years. This allowed Free Play, the play designer/ builder to get to know the children attending the school, observe how children played in the space, and progressively build a stimulating playground around the children's developmental and sensory needs rather than their chronological age. Swings were used as one key therapeutic medium to develop sensory integration with children. Bamboo trees and raised boxes with sensory plants now link the playground to a wooden house where children can play with numerous sensory-based activities indoors if the weather is bad. A hoist within the indoor area allows the children to come out of their wheelchairs and sit in the sand area or ball pool if desired. A level access trampoline and see-saw, mirrors and a water play area also form part of the play space. Lots of planting for shade and quiet areas allow the children to sit and play on the playground.

See also The Children's Occupational Therapist, by Diana Howard: <http://www.freeplaydesigns.com/allchildrenpaper.html> (Project and photo credit - FreePlay)

MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

3.29 Good design at the right location can help to create successful places for play, but they will only remain successful if an effective management and maintenance regime is in place. All spaces will require a degree of ongoing inspection and site maintenance, and the responsibility for this should be clarified at the outset.

3.30 Control of dogs and potential related health hazards is one aspect of management that many children, young people and parents are concerned about. Historically, play spaces have relied upon dog-proof fencing to keep dogs out. However, fencing limits children's freedom of movement, make for less flexible use and reinforces the tendency to restrict unnecessarily children's play to specific parts of public spaces. Dog management issues and actions to prevent any negative impacts should be reflected as part of open spaces strategies and management plans.

3.31 Play spaces do not have to be neat and tidy and grass or mounding can be left to grow longer and provide immense play value, whilst worn areas of grass around seating areas just prove that a park is well used. The level of maintenance required will depend on the size and content of a play space and design solutions can be found for these spaces to generate low maintenance costs.

Below are some examples:

- Grass: Grass can be left to grow longer, creating different textures and areas for

exploration (saving on grass cutting)

- Mounding: Mounding can be left to grow longer as general use keeps the grass from growing out of control – simply mowing a line around the edge of mounding indicates to adults that the area is being maintained and not neglected
- Sand: Sand does not need to be raked and heavily maintained on a daily basis. Apart from having excellent play value and acting as a safety surface, through experience local authorities have realised that they can do a quick daily inspection and rake/fork weekly, with disinfecting happening monthly (see case study on sand pit maintenance below)
- Off the shelf equipment: due to it being more readily available, off the shelf equipment is less costly when replacing parts and whole pieces. After all fallen logs are much cheaper to replace!

3.32 Choices for landscaping shrubs, trees and plants need to be sturdy enough to handle kids at play. Child-resistant materials (i.e fencing), sturdy and attractive shrubs and plants that are low maintenance are the best option to help greenery grows and thrives as well as children. Those responsible for developing, delivering and maintaining innovative natural play spaces within parks and similar spaces may find helpful to refer to Play England's '**Nature Play: Maintenance Guide**¹' to get advice on how to maintain and sustain natural play spaces.

3.33 Developers should agree a management and maintenance scheme with the local planning authority. The scheme should provide for the maintenance of the play facilities in perpetuity to the agreed standard by the developer or an appropriate agency or the transfer of the facilities to the borough for it to manage with an agreed maintenance sum. (See chapter 5)

IMPLEMENTATION POINT: 9

In all development proposals, appropriate arrangements for the long term management, retention, access to and maintenance of any play space and communal facilities should be secured.

The creation and management of good play space will be dependent on the application of the design principles in table 4.8 when creating or improving existing space.

LONDON PLAN POLICY SIGNPOST: 3.6, 3.16, 5.2, 5.9, 5.10, 5.15, 7.1

¹ <http://www.playengland.org.uk/media/120468/nature-play-maintenance-guide.pdf>

CASE STUDY - SAND PIT MAINTENANCE, LONDON BOROUGH OF ISLINGTON (LONDON)

Sand is one of the most popular play space materials and greatly enhances the quality of play opportunities and children's play experiences. The London borough of Islington has sand pits in 11 parks. As part of their grounds maintenance contract, each day park keepers record anything found in sand pits.

Current guidance

The Natural Play Maintenance Guide argues that an assessment of how to maintain sand pits should be site specific. PlayLink has found that maintenance varies across the country from daily to monthly visual inspections, raked daily to raked rarely, and topped up several times a year to every other year. RoSPA Information Sheet 26 'Sand Play in Children's Play Areas' argues that the problems associated with maintaining sand pits are "much less than folk-lore suggests." It recommends that regular raking will be needed (ideally daily but never less than weekly), with periodic forking, regular use of disinfectant, annual topping up and occasional replacement.

What did Islington do and how much did it cost?

Sand was inspected and cleared daily, forked and disinfected weekly, topped up as necessary and replaced roughly every three years. The total annual cost of maintaining sand pits in 2010/11 was £35,000.

Evidence for change

Islington reviewed park keepers' records and found that over 5 months from July to

November 2010 nothing was found in sand pits at most sites. At Highbury Fields and Wray Crescent substances were found that might require subsequent disinfectant around 2 to 3 times a month.

What does Islington do now?

Based on the latest guidance and the latest site specific findings, Islington has put in place a new maintenance regime:

- Inspect and clear all sites daily, fork all sites weekly
- Disinfect Highbury Fields & Wray Crescent sand pits every other week
- Disinfect all other sand pits once a month
- Top up and replace sand as necessary
- Monitor what is found at each site over the next year and reassess after 12 months

The results

Making a small change to the maintenance regime has seen the total cost of maintaining sand pits go down by around £20,000 per year. This has helped us to reach current savings targets and helps to dispel the myth that sand is problematic and expensive to maintain.



Gascoyne Estate Playground
(Hackney, London)
Credit: Erect Architecture

CHAPTER FOUR

APPLYING THE BENCHMARKS

4.1 This chapter provides benchmark standards for London to assist boroughs in the benchmarking of local provision and development of local standards and strategies for the provision and improvement of play and informal recreation facilities. The objective of providing attractive play spaces for all children and young people within walking distance of their homes is dependent on the application of these standards within the context of the overall play strategy, local characteristics and a comprehensive approach to understanding local needs, aspirations and opportunities.

4.2 The London Plan Policy 3.6 highlights the need to make provision for play and informal recreation in development proposals that include housing, based on the expected child population generated by the scheme and an assessment of future needs. This chapter provides benchmark standards that can be used as:

- **A baseline** to understand the extent to which the needs of children and young people living in an area are currently met. This can be used as an evidence base in policy and strategy development and;
- **A development management tool** to establish the requirement for new provision to meet the needs arising from new residential developments when dealing with planning applications.

4.3 Standards for play provision should be developed, reviewed and applied

as an integral part of the review of play strategies (see Chapter 2). It is recommended that a staged approach is followed:

- Stage 1 Preparation and scoping
- Stage 2 Review
- Stage 3 Identifying, mapping and auditing current provision
- Stage 4 Consultation
- Stage 5 Analysis and identification of objectives
- Stage 6 Preparation of strategy and action plan

Recommended steps in the application of benchmark standards

4.4 The benchmark standards apply to assessing the needs of the existing population (A) and the needs arising from new development (B) and address the following key elements of play provision:

- The Quantitative requirement for play provision
- Accessibility to play provision
- The Quality of play provision

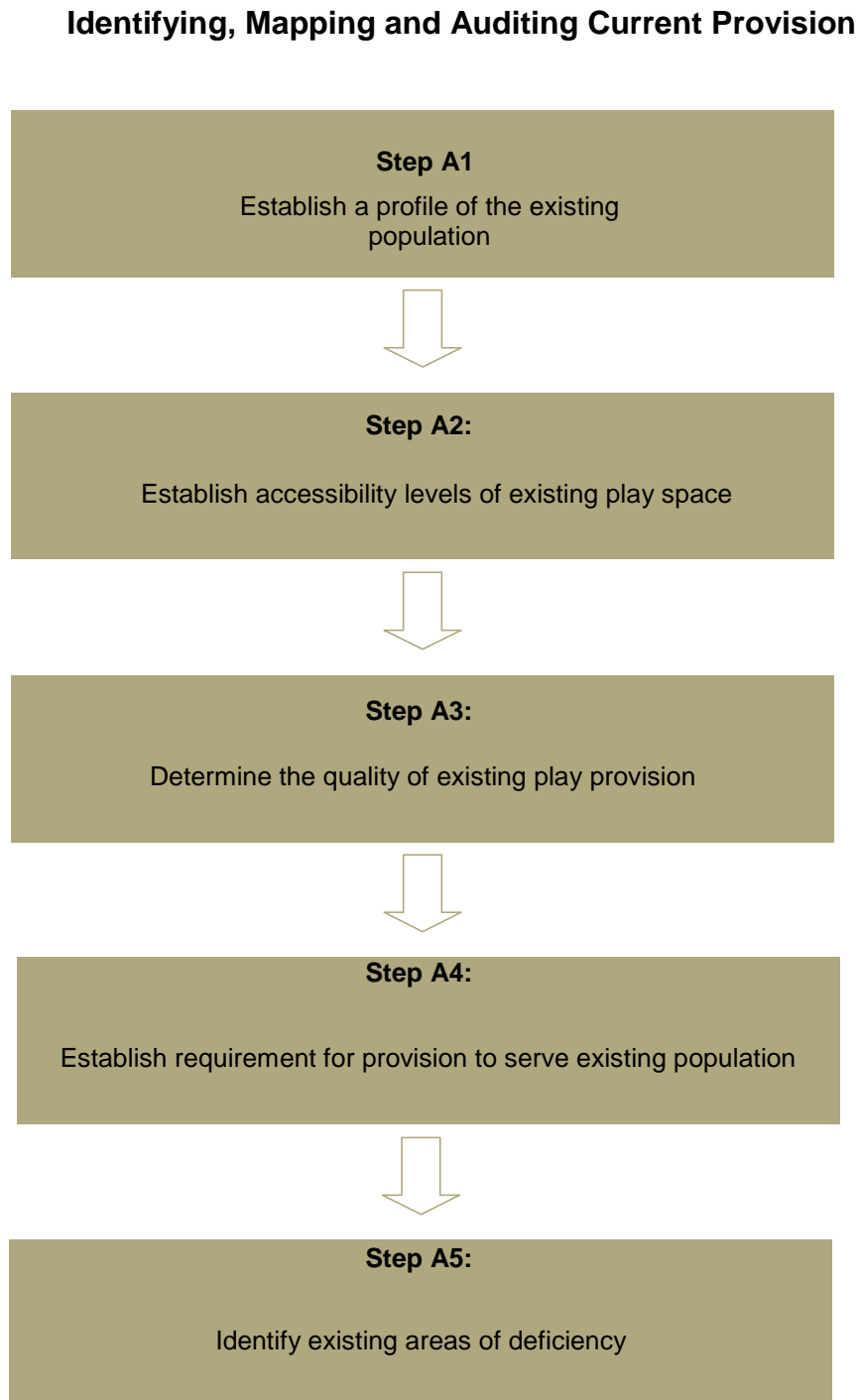
All three elements need to be considered.

A - IDENTIFYING, MAPPING AND AUDITING CURRENT PROVISION.

4.5 A series of steps is proposed in the application of the benchmark standards in assessing the needs of the existing population. These are set out in Figure 4.1. and relate to Stages 3 and 5 in the

preparation/review of play strategies. Steps 1 to 5 on Figure 4.1 relate to the audit of existing provision and these steps are recommended as part of the analysis and identification of objectives of the play strategy (Stage 5) and as a tool to assist in pre-application negotiations and the determination of planning applications.

Figure 4.1 Identifying, Mapping and Audit of Current Provision



Evidence gathering

4.6 A range of evidence already gathered by boroughs to support their local development framework or various strategies can be used to feed into the audit. Policy 3.16 on social infrastructure encourages boroughs to assess the needs for social infrastructure at the local and sub-regional level regularly. These assessments should provide borough officers with helpful information on local deficits and surpluses of play provision within the boroughs. Local town centre health checks can also be a source of information to identify play provision in town centres. Open space strategies should also have identified the needs for children and teenagers recreational space. This may include play areas, skateboard parks and outdoor basketball hoops, and other more informal areas such as youth shelters.

Step A1: What is the population profile?

4.7 A demographic and social profile of the borough should be prepared building on existing data sources to provide an up-to-date picture of the local area and should be examined by output areas or a ward basis. The list below illustrates the type of information that should be considered:

- Population distribution and age structure
- Proportion of children in different age bands
- Poverty, deprivation and polarisation including indices of multiple deprivation such as child poverty

4.8 Based on the GLA's population projections, it will be possible to chart projected population changes. It will be useful to show this information on a series of maps and GIS will allow land and population data to be easily linked, recorded and analysed. This will assist in defining areas of particular need and in assessing these characteristics against the distribution of open space.

4.9 There are significant variations in the population profile of different parts of London. Understanding local needs for play will involve estimating the number and proportion of children and young people in different age bands. This will be a key step in understanding the nature of local needs in the early stages of review of the play strategy.

4.10 The age bands of under-5s, 5-11 and 12+ have been selected to ensure consistency between the application of benchmark standards and the assessment of needs and the approach adopted in the assessment of educational requirements. It is recognised, however, that there will be a range of needs within these age bands and that provision will be required to reflect the needs of all ages. This will require flexibility in design of play areas (see Chapter 3, Diversity). It will also be necessary to plan for changing demographics over time.

Step A2: How accessible is existing play space?

- 4.11 Distance is a key barrier to children's play. All children and young people should have access to play space within reasonable and safe walking distance of their homes. Distance can be a useful tool in helping to identify deficiencies in provision but it will also be necessary to identify any barriers to children accessing those areas within the recommended distance (e.g. traffic, roads where speeds are in excess of 20mph, railways, watercourses, isolated or secluded routes, social divisions associated with/by location) and to make allowance for these in assessing access to existing facilities. Distance should be measured as actual walking distance taking into account barriers to movement. This is particularly relevant for disabled parents and children and older people accompanying children. The following benchmark standards are recommended in respect of different age bands.

Table 4.2 Accessibility to Play Space (Existing Provision)

Child Age	Actual Walking distance from residential unit (taking into account barriers)
Under 5s	100 m
5-11 year olds	400 m
12 +	800 m

- 4.12 The preparation/review of a play strategy will involve an audit of current play provision. In deciding what play spaces to include in the audit, consideration should be given to the range of spaces within the agreed scope of the strategy. As a minimum, audits should assess areas where play is intended to be at least one of the main functions of the space. The dedicated play spaces included in the audit should be free and accessible and provide unrestricted opportunities for play and informal recreation for children and young people. In undertaking the audit, spaces that are genuinely playable (see Chapter 3) can be counted even if they are multi-functional and have other uses. However, categories of open space provision that are not playable should not be counted.

Step A3: What is the quality of existing play provision?

- 4.13 Following an assessment of quantitative requirements and accessibility to existing provision, it should now be clear whether there is a deficiency in existing play provision in the area. The next stage is to understand in more detail the quality of existing provision in order to assist the integration of decision making, including improvements to existing play spaces.
- 4.14 Play areas should be assessed for quality and play value and meet a minimum quality and value benchmark standard. The playability of play spaces should be assessed through a site visit, ideally at a time when children are more likely to be out of doors. The basis of this assessment will vary according to local practice,

but should include consideration of the following:

- children and young people's **use** of spaces and facilities for play and informal recreation (popularity and levels of existing use)
- children and young people's **access** to spaces and facilities for play and informal recreation
- children and young people's **experience** of spaces and facilities for play and informal recreation (social, cultural, economic and physical barriers to access)
- the **quality** of local spaces and facilities available for play and informal recreation (provision of a range of play activities and experiences for different age groups, fitness for use and condition of existing facilities and equipment, equality and inclusiveness)

4.15 Deficiencies in the quality of existing provision should be identified. This should be measured against the adopted qualitative guidelines. A list of improvements that are required to meet the standards should be compiled for each site feeding into the production of management and action plans as part of the play strategy. The strategy should also identify how investment in existing play spaces is to be prioritised.

Step A4: How much space is required to serve the needs of the existing population?

4.16 It will be necessary to assess how much play space is required to meet existing needs. However, many London boroughs (particularly in Inner London) anticipate being in a position of constant deficiency of open space. The audit of play space will establish the level and distribution of existing provision. The application of a quantitative standard must therefore take into account local conditions.

4.17 Existing national standards (see appendix 1) are too high for practical application in London. London boroughs have as a consequence been using a more realistic and achievable figure as a benchmark standard for London since the first publication of the Mayor's SPG on Providing for Children and Young People's Play and Informal Recreation in 2008. **This benchmark standard recommends a minimum of 10 sq m of dedicated play space per child as a basis for assessing existing provision within an area.** This standard is also intended to benchmark provision against other areas. It should be noted that the standard for play provision is *in addition* to other quantitative standards for open space provision applied in open space strategies, although opportunities for the **multifunctional** use of open space should be optimised (see Glossary)

4.18 The benchmark standard will be applied to the number of children within different age bands in the population to establish an overall requirement. This will be assessed against the level and type of existing play provision in the area to establish whether there is an overall deficiency or deficiency

of particular types of provision. There will be flexibility in the application of the benchmark standard at the local level to reflect local needs and the objectives set out in the play strategy and to respond to changes over time.

existing facilities within a reasonable distance from their homes. This should be done through the application of GIS using the criteria and accessibility standards set out in the following table. Table 4.3 also identifies examples of the types of facility that are appropriate for these age groups.

Step A5: Are there existing areas of deficiency?

4.19 Existing play spaces should be identified for the three age bands in the play strategy and catchment areas established by the application of accessibility thresholds. Barriers to movement such as busy roads and rail lines should limit the catchment area and provide its edge. This will identify areas of deficiency where children and young people do not have access to

4.20 The requirement for new play provision to meet the needs of children and young people in areas of deficiency should be identified in the play strategy which should highlight opportunities for meeting this requirement. It will be important to understand the relationship of the play strategy to other strategies and corporate objectives.

4.21 In developing the borough's open space

Table 4.3 Assessing Areas of Deficiency

	Children under 5	Children 5 – 11	Young people 12+
What counts as an existing space for play?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small age appropriate equipped play area • Public open spaces with potential for informal play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipped age-appropriate play area • Public open spaces with potential for informal play • Kickabout areas • Adventure playgrounds • Skatepark, bike park or other wheeled facility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adventure Playgrounds • Sport or recreation space that is open access (e.g. ball court, basketball court, multi-use games area) • Skatepark, bike park or other wheeled facility • Fitness trails or other age-appropriate equipped areas • Outdoor stage • Youth shelters
Actual Walking Distance (taking into account barriers to movement)	100 m	400 m	800 m

strategy, it will also be necessary to identify how to address the Mayor's commitment to improving access to wildlife and natural green space (Policy 7.19). The Mayor has identified "Areas of Deficiency" (AoDs) in access to nature and produced guidance "Improving Londoners' Access to Nature" – a London Plan Implementation Report. The relationship and overlap between AoDs in access to nature and areas of deficiency in play provision should be identified. This will have implications for the location and character of future play provision to address existing deficiencies.

IMPLEMENTATIONS POINTS 10

Benchmark standards will need to be modified to reflect local circumstances, in the light of consultation on children's play needs, the socio-economic context of the area and the priorities identified in the play strategy.

Audits should assess areas where play is intended to be at least one of the main functions of the space (dedicated play spaces). Spaces that are genuinely playable can be counted even if they are multi-functional and have other uses (see Glossary).

Standard for play provision is *in addition* to other quantitative standards for open space provision applied in open space strategies, although opportunities for the multifunctional use of open space should be optimised.

Needs for play space in large scale development should be progressed through Opportunity Area Planning Frameworks or Area Action Plans.

B - NEW DEVELOPMENT: DETERMINING THE PLAY SPACE REQUIREMENTS (PLAY STRATEGY STAGE 5).

4.22 The steps in assessing the requirement for new play provision to meet the needs arising from new development are set out in Figure 4.2. This approach can assist planners in pre-application negotiations and in determining planning applications for new development.

Step B1: What is the requirement for new play space provision to meet future needs?

4.23 In assessing future requirements for play provision, it will be necessary to consider the requirements arising from:

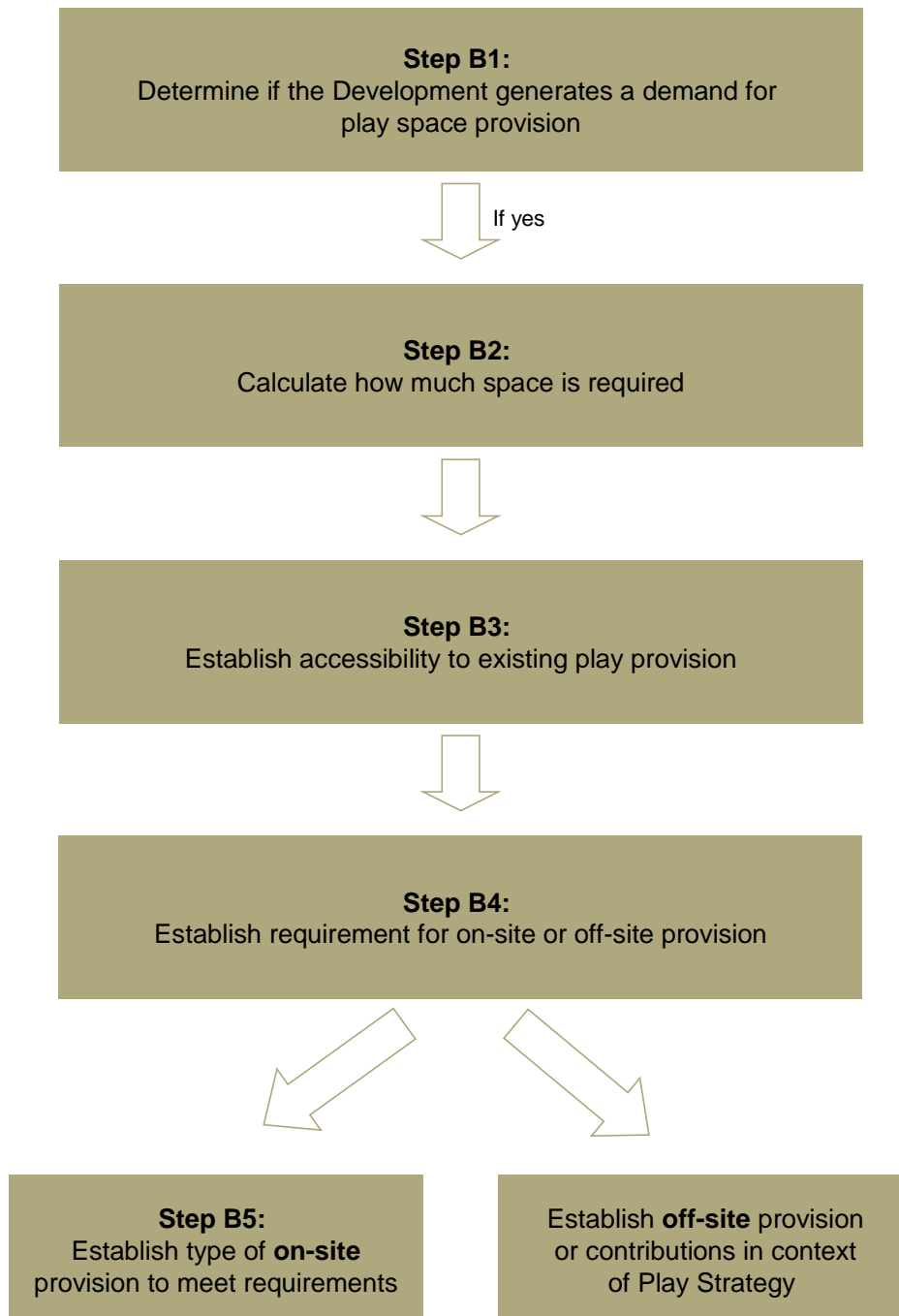
- existing deficiencies and forecast future needs taking into account the future projected growth in the child population
- requirements arising from new development in the area.

4.24 Play strategy should be based on an understanding of future needs in the area. This will require an assessment of the needs arising from new development and an early understanding of how these needs can be met in the area. This will assist in the preparation of Local Development Frameworks and Area Action Plans and inform the preparation of development proposals at an early stage.

4.25 It is recommended that benchmark standards should be applied to the

Figure 4.2 Assessing the needs arising from new development

Determining the Play Space Requirements for New Development



forecast child population of the area. **The benchmark standard of a *minimum* of 10 sq m per child regardless of age is recommended as a basis for assessing future requirements arising from an increase in the child population of the area.** In the light of consultation with London boroughs and research on the application of standards elsewhere, this is considered to be a realistic standard to aspire to and of what is capable of being achieved. The standard for play provision is *in addition* to other quantitative standards for open space provision applied in the open space strategy.

- 4.26 The benchmark standard of 10 sq m per child should be applied in assessing the play requirements arising from new developments in the area unless there is the opportunity to access existing provision. In assessing future requirements for play provision arising from new development, it is recommended that benchmark standards should be applied to the anticipated child occupancy of new development. In applying the benchmark standard of 10 sq m per child to new development, it will be necessary in the first instance to estimate the number of children who are likely to live in the new development. This will give a more effective measure of need and will reflect variations in population characteristics and the mix of housing types and tenures. The play strategy is also required to set out guidelines for new play provision.
- 4.27 All developments with an estimated child occupancy of ten children or more should seek to make appropriate play

provision to meet the needs arising from the development. Where very large residential developments are proposed, the surrounding local context as well as the possibility of creating multifunctional areas (see Chapter 3) should be specifically addressed in calculating the appropriate provision. Developments with an estimated child occupancy of fewer than 10 children should also be required to make an appropriate financial contribution to play provision within the vicinity of the development. If the contribution cannot be made towards an on-site provision in a small development, an equivalent contribution will be required to be made to an existing or new off-site provision. (see Chapter 4).

- 4.28 Proposals involving loss of play spaces without adequate justification or provision for replacement should be resisted (Policy 3.16B). Private back gardens and residential gardens should be protected to enable children to make use of these areas (Policy 3.5).

Step B2: How much space is required?

- 4.29 The recommended approach to assessing the level of play provision required is based on the application of child occupancy rates. The use of child occupancy is already an established planning tool in assessing the impact of new development on education services and a range of alternative methodologies have been developed by London boroughs to understand the child occupancy impacts of development projects. The methods used in assessing education and health requirements can

be applied in assessing the need for play provision arising from new development. This will ensure a consistency and clarity of approach at the local level.

4.30 Child occupancy will vary with the type of accommodation and in terms of dwelling size (usually measured as the number of bedrooms) and tenure. It will also vary by locality, index of multiple deprivation and by the ages of the children. Census data confirms, for example, that private flats have fewer children and any children tend to be young children or babies. Child occupancy factors should relate to new accommodation and incorporate tenure, dwelling type, size of the accommodation in terms of number of bedrooms and the ages of the children.

4.31 The Demography and Policy Analysis Group (DPAG) at the GLA, previously Data Management and Analysis Group (DMAG), can provide advice to boroughs on the analysis of child occupancy from new development. It is recommended that due to the importance of child occupancy factors, boroughs should regularly collect data relating to the initial occupancy of new dwellings particularly in new developments on large sites where the active involvement of developers should be encouraged.

4.32 DMAG briefing paper on child yield (DMAG Briefing 2005/25 August 2005) and DMAG Demography Update entitled Child Occupancy of New Social Housing (2006/11 May 2006) set out different approaches to the calculation of child occupancy and have been used to create

GLA child yield formulae for calculating child occupancy in new development and determining play space. Since the publication of the 2008 SPG, the Wandsworth figures on which the GLA child yield formulae were based have been updated. The GLA child yield figures have therefore been updated accordingly (see appendix 2). Guidance from the GLA Demography and Policy Analysis Group are interim awaiting the 2011 census figures.

4.33 TThe10 sq m per child benchmark should be set in the context of the overall open space requirements, and where open space provision is genuinely playable, the open space may count towards the play space provision.

4.34 In assessing the quantum of play space required, consideration should be given to the type of housing proposed and the provision of private gardens. The requirement for provision of play space for children under the age of five may be discounted in relation to houses with **gardens** in assessing play requirements. However, regardless of the type of housing proposed and the provision of private gardens, there will be a requirement for the provision of play space for all children over the age of five in accordance with the benchmark standard.

4.35 Where development is itself taking place on land that has previously been used by children for play, and as a consequence results in a loss of play provision in an area of defined need for that type of provision, the development should be resisted or compensatory improvements on top of any

Assessing child occupancy and play space requirements

Number of FLATS

	Studio	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	5 bed
Social rented	0	7	14	0	0	0
Intermediate	0	6	13	0	0	0
Market	0	7	13	0	0	0
Total	0	20	40	0	0	0

Number of HOUSES

	Studio	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	5 bed
Social rented	0	0	0	14	0	0
Intermediate	0	0	0	13	0	0
Market	0	0	0	13	0	0
Total	0	0	0	40	0	0

	Number of children	%
Under 5	34	48%
5 to 11	20	28%
12+	17	24%
Total	70	100%

GLA benchmark (sqm)	Alternative local benchmark	Total (sq m play space) required
10		704.0
	5	352.0

The spreadsheet below may be a useful tool for boroughs and developers to help calculate child yield and requirements for play provision based on details about their development (numbers of units, type (houses or flats) and tenure (social rented, intermediate or private) (complete white cells in table)). The play space requirements are then based on the GLA benchmark standard of a minimum of 10 sq m per child but this standard can also be adapted to reflect boroughs' specific circumstances (complete white cell in table).

The tool can be found at <http://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/planning/vision/supplementary-planning-guidance>

need arising from the expected increase in child population should be made (Policy 3.16).

Step B3: Establishing accessibility to existing play provision

4.36 All children and young people should have access to places for play within reasonable and safe walking distance of new residential developments. The following benchmark standards are recommended in respect of different age bands in determining whether there is accessibility to existing play provision to serve the needs of the existing population and new residents in the area.

Table 4.4 Accessibility to Play Space (future provision)

Child Age	Maximum Walking distance from residential unit (taking into account barriers)
Under 5s	100 m
5-11 year olds	400 m
12 +	800 m

4.37 In areas of deficiency, there will be a requirement for new provision to be made to meet the benchmark standards for accessibility to play provision. The local context needs to be considered in establishing how deficiencies are identified. Existing places for play and areas of deficiency should be identified for the three age bands in the play strategy within the identified walking distances.

4.38 It is recommended that development proposals identify the routes to the proposed play areas to support planning applications. Any barriers to movement preventing children accessing these areas (e.g. roads, crossings (including for disabled children), way findings, lighting) should be identified on a map or photo sequence (see photo sequence below). This will be a useful tool in seeking to overcome these barriers through, for instance the creation of safer crossings, traffic calming and better lighting.

Step B4: Where should the new provision be located?

4.39 In assessing the needs arising from new development, it will be important to identify existing play facilities within the identified distance bands. This will determine whether there will be potential for enhancing existing provision to accommodate the additional needs arising from the proposed development as an alternative to new provision.

4.40 The Mayor will expect provision to be made on-site in new development and regeneration schemes in accordance with Policy 3.6 and LDF play policies for the area. Play provision must therefore be considered at an early stage in the preparation of development proposals and masterplans for all sites with child occupancy in excess of ten children. This may include the identification of strategic opportunities that will serve more than one development particularly in areas of major new development and regeneration. This should be addressed in opportunity area

Photo sequence This page describes through a photographic study the route to a local play space. Each image indicates the distance from site and the direction of travel.

Route - Marketplace to Open Space, Oak Crescent



source:Rathbone Market Planning statement, November 2008

planning frameworks and other relevant area action plans (Policy 3.7).

4.41 The play strategy should establish where new play provision should be located and boroughs should identify in development plans where development will take place and consider the opportunities this gives rise to for open space and play provision in the preparation or review of open space and play strategies.

4.42 Whilst the Mayor will expect provision to be made on site, off-site play provision including the creation of new provision, improvements to existing play facilities and/or an appropriate financial contribution secured by legal agreement towards this provision may be acceptable in accordance with Policy 3.6 where it can be demonstrated that there are planning constraints and that it fully satisfies the needs of the development whilst continuing to meet the needs of existing residents. If there is existing provision within an acceptable distance of a proposed development, boroughs should consider the option of off-site contributions as an alternative to new provision if this would meet the objectives set out in the play strategy. If there is no existing provision within an acceptable radius of the site, there will be a requirement for on-site provision or for an equivalent off-site provision to be made which satisfies the accessibility standards. This is summarised in tables 4.5. and 4.7. The potential for suitable off-site provision may be particularly relevant in the case of smaller development schemes. Larger development proposals (over 5 hectares or

500 dwellings) will be expected to make suitable on-site play provision and for this provision to be planned as an integral part of masterplan preparation (Policy 3.7).

4.43 The potential for suitable on-site provision to meet the needs arising from the development will be a function of:

- The size of the proposed development and the number of children: how much play space will be required?
- The quantitative requirement for play space generated by the development: is it sufficient to provide a suitable facility to meet the needs of different age groups?
- The potential to meet needs through improvements to existing on-site or off-site facilities and the removal of barriers to accessibility to these facilities or the provision of new off-site facilities: is existing provision accessible to the development or have opportunities for new provision been identified in the play strategy?
- The provision of multifunctional and other spaces such as roof, terrace or indoor spaces where these are safe, convenient and accessible: what is the potential for flexible use of spaces to meet the needs of different age groups?

Table 4.5 Provision of play space to meet the needs of new development

		Under 5s	5-11	12+
Existing provision	within 100 m	On site or off-site contribution	Off-site contribution	Off-site contribution
	within 100-400m	On-site	On site or off-site contribution	On site or off-site contribution
	within 400-800m	On-site	On-site	On-site or off-site contribution
No existing provision	within 100 m	On-site	Off-site provision	Off-site provision
	within 100-400m	On-site	On-site	On site or off-site provision
	within 400-800m	On-site	On-site	On-site

4.44 In meeting the needs for play provision arising from the development, the developer will be expected to consult with the borough council at an early stage on the preparation of an appropriate brief and to include proposals as part of the planning application. The proposals should be in accordance with the borough's play strategy. Developers will also be expected to take professional advice in the development of proposals from a landscape architect and/or play consultant and, if it is a major development referred to the Mayor of London, during pre-application negotiations with GLA officers.

IMPLEMENTATION POINTS 11 - ON OR OFF-SITE PROVISION

On site and off site provision should satisfy the accessibility standards in table xx. If it is demonstrated that additional provision cannot

be made on site, an equivalent contribution will be required to be made to existing provision or new off-site provision within the distance standards

Improvement to existing play facilities and any necessary access improvements may be an alternative to the creation of new on/off-site provision and accommodate the needs of both new and existing residents

Off-site provision may be a suitable option for small development

Larger development proposals/masterplans will be expected to make suitable on-site play provision (Policy 3.7)

Step B5: What types of play space should be provided and how should existing play provision be improved?

4.45 The type of provision will be dependent on the needs arising from the development and existing provision in the area. The type of provision to be made on site should also be appropriate to the size of the development and characteristics of the surrounding area.

4.46 Typologies of play space should be developed by individual boroughs to reflect their local characteristics and facilities and how local children perceive their environment. These should be included in the play strategy. A typology is proposed in Table 4.6. It defines a hierarchy of play provision and addresses the potential for multifunctional spaces for different age groups and activities. It provides greater flexibility in relation to changing local circumstances and needs (see also Glossary):

- **Doorstep playable space:** a place where young children under the age of 5 can play
- **Local playable space:** a place where children aged up to 11 can play
- **Neighbourhood playable space:** a more extensive place where children aged up to 11 can play, and where there are some facilities for young people over 11.
- **Youth space:** a place where young

people aged 12 and above can meet and take part in informal sport-based activities and other informal recreation.

4.47 The age ranges stated in this hierarchy are indicative. They are inclusive, not exclusive: in other words, they set out the broad age range of the main intended user group(s). They do not mean that users should be excluded. All types of space in the hierarchy are public open spaces where children's active play is a legitimate activity, and where they are familiar playful or recreational features in the space (which may be play equipment, play landscaping or facilities for informal recreation. However, the spaces have different characteristics, space and location requirements. The spaces may be combined, through some form of separation or boundary is desirable between youth spaces and other types of space in the hierarchy. Apart from youth spaces, the spaces in the hierarchy have the potential to be shared, multifunctional spaces, with good design and management. Youth spaces are the exception, because experience shows that young people value space that they can feel some ownership of.

4.48 The creation of incidental playable spaces are dependent on the creative use of the public realm to provide enjoyment and discovery for children and young people for example through the creation of landscaping and public art and boroughs should develop programmes for enhancing the public realm. These incidental spaces can contribute towards meeting the appropriate dedicated space standard,

particularly on large developments – but should not replace it entirely. In new housing development, temporary facilities may provide a means of mitigating any loss, as part of proposals for permanent reprovision (Policy 3.6)

4.49 The characteristics of the main categories of playable space are set out in table 4.6:

4.50 Doorstep playable space suitable for younger children can be accommodated in smaller areas whilst the other types of space will require larger areas. These principles are illustrated in Table 4.7.

4.51 These spaces should only be set up if they can meet high standard design principles. A space that is overshadowed or in a windy corridor is not worth being developed. Table 4.8 sets out the design principles for different types of play spaces.

4.52 It should be noted that the design of roads (conducive to traffic) and residential areas can sometime have a greater impact on children's play than the actual provision of play spaces (see chapter on accessibility). Similarly, the success of any play space is as dependant on the supporting amenity as the play opportunities offered within it (public toilets, seating, water fountains, etc).

Table 4.6 Playable Space Typology

	Doorstep Playable Space	Local Playable Space	Neighbourhood Playable Space	Youth Space
Description	A landscaped space including engaging play features for young children, and places for carers to sit and talk. No formal supervision	A landscaped space with landscaping and equipment so that children aged from birth to 11 can play and be physically active and they and their carers can sit and talk. Flexible use No formal supervision	A varied natural space with secluded and open areas, landscaping and equipment so that children aged from birth to 11 can play and be physically active and they and their carers can sit and talk, with some youth facilities. Flexible use May include youth space May be supervised	Social space for young people aged 12 and over to meet, hang out and take part in informal sport or physical recreational activities. No formal supervision
Minimum Size	100 sq m	300 sq m	500 sq m	200 sq m
Age Group	0-5	0-11	all ages	12+
Examples of Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landscaping Climbable objects Fixed equipment Seating for carers Sand and water feature (if possible) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landscaping to create natural feel, including changes of level Equipment integrated into the landscaping, that allows children to swing, slide and climb Multigames/ball walls Kick about area Basketball nets Seating area away from equipment Sand (if possible) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landscaping to create natural feel, including changes of level Equipment integrated into the landscaping, that allows children to swing, slide and climb Seating area away from equipment Bike, skate and skateboard facilities Kick about area Basketball nets Sand if possible Hard surface area if possible Water feature if possible Shelter plus basketball net, small wheeled facility or climbing wall/boulder for young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Space and facilities for informal sport or recreation activity (e.g. multi-use sports areas (MUSA), multi-use games area (MUGA), climbing walls or boulders, wheeled sports area, skatepark or BMX track, traversing wall, climbing boulders, exercise trails, outdoor exercise/fitness equipment). Seating areas on the edge of the activity space. Youth Shelter Landscaping
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential areas including housing estates Pocket Parks Public Squares 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential areas including housing estates Local Parks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Larger residential areas and housing estates Local Parks District Parks School playgrounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Larger residential areas and housing estates Adjacent to community facilities Local Parks District Parks Town centres

Table 4.7 Play provision in new developments

No. of children	10 – 29	30 – 49	50 – 79	80+
Size of space required	100-300 sq m	300-500 sq m	500 – 800 sq m	800 sq m +
Facilities for under 5s	On-site doorstep playable space	On site local playable space	On-site local playable space	On-site local or neighbourhood playable space
Facilities for 5-11s	Off-site within 400 m			
Facilities for 12+	Off-site within 800 m	Off-site within 800 m	Off-site within 800 m or on-site subject to size and local circumstances	On-site youth space
Possible variation to reflect existing provision	If area is deficient in play space for 5 – 11s, some on-site facilities should be provided	If area is within 400m of existing facilities for 5-11s, an off-site contribution may be considered if in accordance with play strategy	If area is deficient in spaces for 12+, some on-site facilities or new off-site provision should be provided within 800 m	If area is within 800 m of existing facilities for 12+, an off-site contribution may be considered if in accordance with play strategy

Design principles

4.53 As well as quantity, quality is also important. The creation and management of good play space will be dependent on the application of qualitative standards when creating new space or improving existing space. Chapter 3 sets out what makes a good play space. Commissioners and designers may also want to refer to Play England’s Design for Play¹ guidance.

Table 4.8 summarises some principles for consideration.

¹ <http://www.playengland.org.uk/resources/design-for-play.aspx>

Table 4.8 Design Principles

	Doorstep playable space	Local playable space	Neighbourhood playable space	Youth space
Quality	Landscape architects or designers who can demonstrate quality work and have expertise in creating child-friendly public space should design spaces. Designs should be site-specific to create a sense of place and reflect the character of the space. Emphasis should be placed on the creation of a high quality child/family friendly environment that are sustainable and associated requirements such as toilets and baby-changing facilities should be considered at the design stage.			
Boundary	In principle, no barriers needed between space and adjacent public space subject to characteristics of surrounding area and potential hazards (i.e. busy streets, deep open water). Boundaries (i.e. around areas intended for younger children) should normally be created by landscaping and planting.			No physical barriers needed, though some may be helpful depending on context (i.e. in ball courts and pitches where there is limited open space). Ownership of it for young people
Location	Not more than 15 m away from, and well overlooked by, residential, educational or retail property; or adjacent to main routes through open space. Linked by established footpath system Integrated into design of development Easily accessible	Not more than 30 m from the frontages of, and well overlooked by, residential, educational or retail property; or within 30 m of main routes through open space. Easily accessible Linked by established footpath system Integrated into design of development Appropriate for locating in parks or larger green spaces	Between 10 and 50 m (depending on context) from the frontages of residential, retail, educational or leisure property, or within 50m of main routes through open space. Some privacy will be valued by young people Avoid locations where noise will cause disturbance	

Layout	Differentiation of spaces for different age groups is valuable where there is enough space, and can help to reduce conflicts between users of different ages but boundaries should be blurred, not rigid, to allow mixed use of spaces and use by family and groups of different ages. Multiple entrances, exits and routes through spaces help to ensure one age group does not dominate. Spaces should be designed and managed to allow children the chance to take risks and attempt physically challenging activities, while striking a balance that keeps the risk of serious injury to an acceptable level.			
	<div>Sensitive landscape treatment</div> <div>Permeable layout in terms of entry and circulation</div> <div>Access for children with disabilities</div> <div>Sense of enclosure for users</div>	<div>Sensitive landscape treatment</div> <div>Permeable layout in terms of entry and circulation</div> <div>Access for children with disabilities</div> <div>Secluded and more open areas</div> <div>Youth facilities not adjacent to facilities for younger children</div>	<div>Sensitive landscape treatment</div> <div>Permeable layout in terms of entry and circulation</div> <div>Access for children with disabilities</div> <div>Access for children with disabilities</div>	
Detailed design of the space	It should consider context, equipment and informal landscaping together, take account of the density and character of the area, and other standards such as access to nature. It should include landscaping and natural features. Well-designed hard landscaping such as walls and steps can serve many uses, including informal seating, stimuli for physical play and goals and surfaces for ball games. Sand should where possible be included in spaces that are used by younger children for its potential for creative and constructive play. Fixed equipment provides a focus for some forms of play activity and helps to signify the target users of a space, but should not dominate. As well as physical exercise, play space should also provide rich, multisensory experiences.			
	<div>Range of physical and sensory experiences</div>	<div>Multifunctional equipment</div> <div>Range of physical experiences</div>	<div>Multifunctional equipment</div> <div>Range of physical experiences</div>	<div>Range of facilities- basketball hoops, meeting point/ shelter, Multi Use Sports Areas (MUSAs), Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs), ball courts, wheeled activities, climbing walls/ boulders, fitness equipments</div>
Commissioning of project	Layout and design should start with a clear brief stating the user groups the space is intended for, management and maintenance arrangements and the key characteristics of the space, including access points and safety issues. The brief should reflect the likely population profile and be shaped by an audit of nearby spaces and facilities.			
Indicative Minimum maintenance costs	1.5% build costs/annum	1.5% build costs/annum	1.5% build costs/annum	1.5% build costs/annum

IMPLEMENTATION POINTS 12 - GENERAL

Play provision must be considered at an early stage in the preparation of development proposals and masterplans for all sites with child occupancy in excess of ten children

Opportunities for new play provision to serve more than one development particularly in areas of major new development and regeneration should be considered as long as the needs of both new and existing residents are satisfied

Where development is itself taking place on land that has previously been used by children for play, and as a consequence results in a loss of play provision in an areas of defined needs for that type of provision, the development should be resisted or compensatory improvements on top of any need arising from the expected increase in child population should be made (Policy 3.16)

It is recommended that boroughs and developers apply a minimum benchmark of 10m sq of dedicated play space per child to establish the quantitative requirements for play space provision arising from new developments

Boroughs and developers may want to refer to the tool to assess child yield occupancy and requirements for play space (see page 57)

Provision of play space in large scale development should be addressed through appropriate masterplans (Policy 3.7)

Regardless of the provision of private gardens, provision of play space for all children over the age of five should be provided to enable children to play with each other.

It is recommended that development proposals identify routes to the proposed play areas to support planning applications and ensure play spaces are accessible to all.

Typologies of play space should be developed by individual boroughs to reflect their local characteristics and facilities and how local children perceive their environment

Incidental spaces can contribute towards meeting the appropriate dedicated space standard, particularly on large developments – but should not replace it entirely.



Hammarby Sjöstad Stockholm Sweden Courtyard playspace (photo Tim Gill)

CASE STUDY - GASCOYNE ESTATE PLAYGROUND (HACKNEY, LONDON)



Also see image at the start of chapter 4. Gascoyne Estate benefited from extensive green spaces on a sloping site.

The architects wanted to ensure that their creative design workshops with children yielded outcomes that were relevant to the site and prepared topographical base models for the children to design and build their play interventions.

The architects' design exaggerates the existing topography and creates a landscape of hills and valleys. A birch grove is planted in one of the valleys, where it will grow and eventually envelop a structure of platforms and bridges. (Project and photo - Erect architecture)



Engagement event,
Kilburn Grange Park Adventure
Playground and Playcentre
(Camden, London)
Credit:

CHAPTER FIVE

MAKING IT HAPPEN

- 5.1 The application of benchmark standards in developing local standards for provision will assist in the development of policies to address deficiencies, enhance existing provision and create new play space. The emphasis should be on the achievement of improvements in both the quantity and quality of play space with a clear emphasis on implementation.

CONSULTATION

- 5.2 Children and young people should be involved in deciding the design of places for play wherever possible, alongside the involvement of experienced professionals. This will build ownership and help ensure the spaces are shaped by children's needs, wishes and insights into what works and what does not work. Location in particular can be a thorny issue, and planners will need to make sure that the views of children are given due weight alongside those of parents, residents and other users. The views of adults should not automatically be allowed to override those of children and young people.
- 5.3 Informal engagement should be encouraged, such as carefully observing what works and how children play, and temporarily testing what works and what is missing. This will avoid misleading consultations where children are asked what they want (in a banal way), and where there is not enough creative interpretation of their replies to the banal questions.
- 5.4 There is a wide range of methods that can be used to engage children and young

people and the community in planning, designing, maintaining and managing play spaces. It will be important to adapt the techniques to the needs and aspirations of the different ages, preferences and backgrounds of the children and young people in question.

- 5.5 The Mayor's Guide to Preparing Play Strategies provides guidance on consultation with children and young people and the wider community. Play England's Design for Play: A guide to creating successful play spaces also gives some guidance on engaging with the community and on involving children in the construction process.

CASE STUDY - CRANSTON ESTATE PLAYGROUND (HACKNEY, LONDON)



To explore the idea of natural play, creative natural workshops were organised by the architect. Children collected materials in a local park and were encouraged to develop spatial proposals in model form. During the design presentation events, the architect facilitated den building activities and enticed residents and children to climb over a low fence to discover the only existing green space in the estate. The architect's design objective was to create a communal space for all age groups, providing sand and water play for young children, seating and socialising opportunities tucked between the existing bushes and under a canopy for all residents and challenging play for an older age group. The new play structures have been designed around some of the existing equipment to extend its life and to maximise play value. (erect architecture)

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

5.6 Community involvement can lead to increase use and enhanced quality of play space provision. Partnership working between the community and the local authority can present many benefits. It can encourage local ownership, give access to funding to the community, expert advice, increase the community's understanding of local problems and the local authority's constraints. It enables the local authority to understand and better respond to local needs. All these contribute to long term sustainability. For the community itself, community involvement can help shape places that are more attractive, get parents to get to know each other better, build trust between them, develop social networks and a sense of community belonging.

5.7 Examples of community involvement activities can be to:

- Involve children and parents in bulb or tree planting,
- Involve children and parents in the construction of the play space
- Identify unused/under-used local community spaces such as wide grass verge or pavement, a underused garage forecourt or front garden or the street itself and reclaim them to transform them into new play spaces
- Increase adult supervision by groups of volunteers made up of grandparents, teenagers, parents and other adults to

create greater, safer play options for the children living in the area, giving parents a clear signal that it is fine for their children to play.

Mechanisms may be needed to recognise local voluntary input.

CASE STUDY - DIY PLAY STREET



Building on Sustrans's DIY Streets project, London Play is currently working with four residential streets in Haringey, Croydon and two in Southwark as part of the DIY Play Streets initiative to put in place play solutions that are right for their street. One street in Peckham (Southwark) has already formed a group of volunteers who supervise the play and set boundaries with the children on what activities are acceptable in the space available. The street mainly consists of privately-owned housing, with a housing estate at one end. The children from both areas play happily together in activities that do not highlight tensions between the 'haves' and

the 'have-nots.' The experience has proved to be very successful, both in terms of increasing safe play options for the kids and in encouraging interactions with neighbours. (London Play)

5.8 Play partnerships can also support and influence provision for play.

CASE STUDY – PROMOTING PLAY THROUGH THE PLANNING PROCESS EARLS COURT REDEVELOPMENT

The Play Partnership is a multi-agency advisory body that supports play provision in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. There are representatives from a wide range of statutory bodies, housing associations, and third sector organisations. The Play Partnership oversees the Play Strategy and advises on the best use of local resources. The Play Partnership has had a significant input into the Royal Borough's Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF provides a clear rationale of the borough's commitment to play and the expectations for new developments. This is crucial to ensure that developers take on board the importance of public amenity for children and young people. Development Officers from the Planning Department have been trained by members of the Play Partnership and are kept informed of play issues. The Earls Court Redevelopment is the largest rebuilding project in this part of London for many years. The majority of the site will be zoned for residential use, including private and social housing. Other features are a new park in the middle of the site and some

open access squares at the North End Road side of the site.

In the Earls Court Ward in Kensington and Chelsea there is no publically accessible play space for children of any age. The ward has pockets of deprivation and many families live in houses in multiple occupation. Consequently, the development of the Exhibition Centre site represents a unique opportunity to create open access space for new and existing children and their families.

A sub-group of the Play Partnership has been established to comment on the Earls Court Development. The majority of members of the sub-group are from third sector organisations.

Using the Local Development Framework and London Plan, the sub-group will analyse the planning application and the Local Development Plan for Earls Court. They will take advice from planning officers and play specialists. The developers will be expected to involve the Play Partnership in the next stage of the project. This might include advice on the location of facilities within the broader scheme and also the type of play opportunities that are made available. (Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, London)

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

- 5.9 There should be a clear requirement for all new residential developments generating more than 10 children (as determined by the application of child occupancy assessments) to provide suitable play space as part of the development scheme. Developments with an estimated child occupancy of less than 10 children should be required to make an appropriate financial contribution to play provision within the vicinity of the development.
- 5.10 Facilities to be provided within the development should be provided in accordance with a scheme to be agreed with the planning authority and either;
- will be maintained in perpetuity to the agreed standard by the developer or an appropriate agency; or
 - will be transferred to the borough for it to manage together with an agreed maintenance sum providing for a minimum 15 year period of maintenance. The borough should take into account revenue funding after the expiration of this period in future budget reviews.
- 5.11 The scheme should ensure adequate day-to-day upkeep and inspection, and repairs and refurbishment over time. The developer will be required to cover maintenance costs for the specified period. The borough may also wish to consider other mechanisms for ensuring the continued maintenance. These could include endowments, trusts or friends

groups.

- 5.12 Where it is determined that provision is to be made off-site, the developer will be required to enter into an agreement to make an appropriate commuted payment to secure an equivalent level of play provision and future maintenance. The use of the commuted payments will be determined in relation to the priorities and opportunities identified in the play strategy.
- 5.13 In phased developments, play provision should be implemented in the early phases of development to ensure that the needs of new residents are met. Developers should ensure that spaces are completed within the same timescale as the adjacent housing.

CALCULATION OF DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS AND THE COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL)

- 5.14 The provisions secured under Section 106 agreements must comply with the tests set out in regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Regulations 2010 and all appropriate national planning guidance.
- 5.15 The calculation of developer contributions to secure play provision to serve the needs of new developments will be determined through negotiation between the local planning authority and developer. However, in order to provide greater clarity and guidance, it is recommended that a standard approach is adopted. The following formulae are proposed for the calculation of contributions.

Costs of On-site provision

5.16 The emphasis will be on the provision of high quality play space which meets the needs of the development and enhances play provision in the area. The cost of on-site provision will be made up of two elements:

- play space provision- design , layout, landscaping and equipment
- maintenance, supervision and management

Costs of Off-site provision

5.17 The calculation of commuted sums to secure off-site provision will be calculated through negotiation but must be adequate to ensure that appropriate provision can be implemented. The level of contribution should be no less than the level of contribution which would be made if provision was to be made on-site. However, consideration should also be given to the type of provision which will be required and whether other costs such as land costs may be involved if new play space is to be provided. Contributions towards offsite provision will be required to comply with relevant planning guidance and statutory requirements.

5.18 Developments with an estimated child occupancy of less than 10 children should be required to make an appropriate financial contribution to play provision within the vicinity of the development. The use of the commuted payments will be limited to the provision and maintenance

of play facilities and will be determined in relation to the priorities and opportunities identified in the Play Strategy.

5.19 Developer contributions can be used both to support the management and development of on-site spaces and to improve play opportunities off-site. Contributions for off-site provision should aim to improve children and young people's free access on a daily basis to play and informal recreational opportunities, rather than more structured leisure or youth activities.

5.20 Contributions from more than one development within an area may be pooled to improve play provision or to make new provision off-site (although from 6th April 2014 or from the date a borough adopts a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging schedule, such pooling of contributions will only be possible across four or fewer developments). Opportunities for the pooling of contributions should be identified in the Development Plan and play strategy.

5.21 Play space and equipment will be infrastructure capable of being funded through the CIL (although revenue costs of management will not be). If CIL is used in this way, there are limitations on the extent to which planning obligations can also be used (see regulation 123 of the CIL Regulations 2010). The CIL Regulations prevent use of both the CIL and section 106 to fund the same infrastructure; boroughs are recommended to be clear about which funding route they intend to use, and to be careful in the lists of

projects they intend to fund through the CIL they publish under regulation 123 (4).

- 5.22 Consideration should also be given to linking developer contributions with other funding sources and programmes such as regeneration initiatives, European funding, charitable sources and lottery distributors. Current sources of funding include: Natural England that have funded a number of play projects in London and elsewhere aiming to encourage children to play out more in nature, BBC Children in Need, Help a London Child, BIG Reaching Communities, some elements of Heritage Lottery Fund, Sport England and the London Funders Group.

CASE STUDY - THE PLAY CONTAINER FOR GILLETTE SQUARE

Dalston, Hackney (London)

Public spaces often require additional infrastructure to thrive. In the case of Gillett Square there was a clear need for the introduction of play elements as a means to increase people's awareness of the Square and the events that happen there, as part of their everyday routines in particular the many people using Ridley Road Market regularly. The Gillette Square partnership has used a small grant to fund the play equipment being taken out and put back in 4 days per week. Once it is out children rearrange it. A local café also takes care of a table tennis table. (muf)

MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 5.23 The play strategy will need to be kept under regular review in order to be effective. The need for review will depend on whether there are significant changes in funding, legislation, Section 106 opportunities and other strategies. Boroughs who have adopted a play strategy or open space strategy should review these strategy documents in the light of the benchmark standards and any local standards for play provision.



Abbey Lane Open Space (Stratford, London)
Credit: FHAPlay

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 - BENCHMARK

The standards provided in the Mayor's draft SPG have been developed based on research on the application of similar standards elsewhere. The Fields in Trust (FIT) benchmark standard for outdoor playing space for children and young people is the most widely used standard for play provision outside London. It updates and modernises 'The Six Acre Standard' last revised in 2001. The FIT standards differ from the standards proposed in this guidance as they are based on total population forecasts as opposed to forecast child population. Both approaches have their strengths and are useful

as benchmarks against which progress can be evaluated and as planning tools. The tables below summarise the FIT's proposed standards for play.

Table A1 Children's Playing Space Quantity Benchmark Standard

Children's Playing Space	Benchmark Standard (Hectares per '000)
Designated Playing Space, including equipped playing space	0.25
Informal Playing Space	0.55
Total Children's Playing Space	0.80

Table A2 Children's Playing Space Accessibility Benchmark Standard

Type of Space	Distance Criteria (metres)	
	Walking Distance	Straight Line Distance
Local area for play or 'door-step' spaces – for play and informal recreation (LAPs)	100	60
Local equipped, or local landscaped, areas for play – for play and informal recreation (LEAPs)	400	240
Neighbourhood equipped areas for play – for play and informal recreation, and provision for young people (NEAPs); this also covers what is referred to in the Mayor of London's SPG as youth space	1000	600

APPENDIX 2 - CHILD OCCUPANCY OF NEW HOUSING METHODOLOGY

The following information from the Demography and Policy Analysis Group at the GLA is provided as guidance on calculation of child occupancy. It is intended as one example as to how child occupancies from new developments can be determined, and may be useful for local authorities or developers (for the purpose of calculating education contributions), it is expected that the same child occupancy calculations would be used for determining play and informal recreation requirements.

The GLA Demography and Policy Analysis Group used the updated Wandsworth Calculator and the DMAG briefing 2006-11: Child Occupancy

of New Social Housing to update GLA child yield formulae for market and intermediate flats and homes and social rented flats and homes. Guidance from the GLA Demography and Policy Analysis Group are interim awaiting the 2011 census figures.

SOCIAL RENTED FIGURES

The social rented figures are based on the **DMAG briefing 2006-11: Child Occupancy of New Social Housing.**

Assumptions made:

- The figures for 16-17 was used as proxy for 16 to 18

Social rented flats

Age	Number of Bedrooms					
	0	1	2	3	4	5+
0-4	0.00	0.20	0.64	0.62	0.41	0.57
5-10	0.00	0.00	0.23	0.74	1.22	1.66
11-15	0.00	0.00	0.08	0.47	1.29	1.76
16-18	0.00	0.00	0.05	0.17	0.37	0.51
Total	0.00	0.20	1.00	2.00	3.29	4.50

Social rented houses

Age	Number of Bedrooms					
	0	1	2	3	4	5+
0-4	0.00	0.20	0.64	0.62	0.41	0.57
5-10	0.00	0.00	0.23	0.74	1.22	1.66
11-15	0.00	0.00	0.08	0.47	1.29	1.76
16-18	0.00	0.00	0.05	0.17	0.37	0.51
Total	0.00	0.20	1.00	2.00	3.29	4.50

DMAG Briefing 2005/25: Child Yield, surveyed recent data to update previous analysis on child yield in new properties by the London Research Centre that had used data from the 1991 Labour Force Survey. New dwellings survey data from Wandsworth and Oxfordshire were presented alongside data from the 2002 London Household Survey.

This *Demography Update* aims to create revised child yield formulae specific for determining play space together with additional education and health service requirements in social housing developments.

The data available to this *Update* are:

London and Sub-Regional Strategy Support Studies (SSSS) dataset, 2004 - an analysis of the approximately 500 Council tenants that had moved into their accommodation in the 12 months prior to being interviewed. This shows children by number of bedrooms (1-6). The data refer to all 'new lettings', not just new-build, of which there is very little in Council stock.

Wandsworth New Housing Survey, 2004 - an analysis of children by number of bedrooms (1-5+) in 212 new housing association properties. Children are shown by ages 0-4, 5-10 and 11-15.

Oxfordshire New Housing Survey, 2005 - an analysis of children by number of bedrooms (1-8) in 728 new social housing properties across the county. Data are available by single years of age from 0 to 19.

The SSSS dataset is unreliable for 5 and 6 bedrooms due to small sample size, but provides the following results:

1 bedroom 0.179 children (0.2)
 2 bedrooms 0.954 children (1.0)
 3 bedrooms 2.056 children (2.0)
 4 bedrooms 3.316 children (3.3)
 5 bedrooms (4.5)
 6 bedrooms (6.0)

The figures in brackets have been taken as the initial occupancy norm for these properties and used in further in this Update. Equivalent data for new housing association tenants show similar outcomes for 1 and 2 bedrooms but only 1.6 and 1.8 children in 3 and 4 bedrooms.

The Wandsworth and Oxfordshire Surveys have been truncated to bedrooms 1 to 4+ due to the small samples of larger properties and show the following numbers of children:

Bedrooms:	1	2	3	4+
Wandsworth (0-15)	0.07	0.40	1.88	1.90
Oxfordshire (0-15)	0.04	0.69	1.76	2.86
Oxfordshire (0-17)	0.05	0.73	1.93	3.21

Both the Surveys show fewer children in all sizes of accommodation compared to the SSSS-based norms, with particularly low numbers in 4+ bedroom properties in Wandsworth. Taking all children under age 18 in Oxfordshire shows a much better fit to the allocations norm, but still with relatively few children in 1-bedroom properties.

In connecting the allocations norm with the survey data links have been made with the Oxfordshire data and include all children under age 18. The age patterns of the child population in social housing in Oxfordshire are shown in Chart 1.

Chart 1 Children by age in new social housing by number of bedrooms, Oxfordshire 2005



The key results of these patterns are that as the bedroom size increases, as well as having more children, the age-structure of the children changes, with relatively more children at all ages over 3 in 3-bedroom properties than in 2-bedrooms. Larger properties are inclined to have more teenagers and fewer pre-school age children, with the 4+ bedroom properties having peak numbers of children at secondary school ages.

The Oxfordshire data have been linked to the allocations norm, with the single years of age data scaled accordingly, to create new child yield formulae. The age structure for children in 4+ bedrooms have been linked to the separate norms for 4, 5 and 6 bedrooms. The results are

as follows:

Bed-rooms	1	2	3	4	5	6
Age 0-4	0.20	0.64	0.62	0.41	0.57	0.75
Age 5-10	0.00	0.23	0.74	1.22	1.66	2.22
Age 11-15	0.00	0.08	0.47	1.29	1.76	2.35
Age 16-17	0.00	0.05	0.17	0.37	0.51	0.68
Total	0.20	1.00	2.00	3.30	4.50	6.00

These results are illustrated in Chart 2. While the outcomes for 5 and 6 bedroom properties are more speculative there are, in reality, relatively few such lettings available.

These formulae will assist with the development of local play strategies as anticipated in the Mayor's Guide to Preparing Play Strategies (2005) and in the assessment of play space needs arising from new developments. It will also inform supplementary guidance on standards for children's play and informal recreation (forthcoming, Autumn 2006). The formulae can also be used for planning new education and health provision for children.

Chart 2 Child Occupancy of New Social Housing



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MARKET AND INTERMEDIATE FIGURES

The market and intermediate figures are based on the updated Wandsworth calculator.

Wandsworth calculator

The population yield calculator has been developed by Wandsworth Council using results of the 2004 New Housing Survey and 2007 New Housing Re-Survey. The GLA child yield formulae are based on figures from Wandsworth 2004 Sites Original Survey.

Assumptions made:

Market assumptions

0 bed flats = yield 1 bed flats
5+ bed flats = yield 4 bed flats
0 bed houses = yield 1 bed houses

Intermediate assumptions:

0 bed flats = yield 1 bed flats
3 bed flats = yield 2 bed flats
4+ bed flats = yield 3 bed houses
0 bed houses = yield 0 bed flats
1 bed houses = yield 1 bed flats
4+ bed houses = yield 3 bed houses

The 16 to 18 figure was three quarter of Wandsworth 16 to 19 figures

:

Market flats

Age	Number of Bedrooms					
	0	1	2	3	4	5+
0-4	0.00	0.00	0.07	0.17	0.00	0.00
5-10	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.11	0.00	0.00
11-15	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.03	0.00	0.00
16-18	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.00	0.00
Total	0.01	0.01	0.10	0.33	0.00	0.00

Market houses

Age	Number of Bedrooms					
	0	1	2	3	4	5+
0-4	0.17	0.17	0.08	0.29	0.63	0.36
5-10	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.10	0.31	0.58
11-15	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.05	0.13	0.25
16-18	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.04	0.17
Total	0.17	0.17	0.12	0.45	1.10	1.36

Intermediate flats

Age	Number of Bedrooms					
	0	1	2	3	4	5+
0-4	0.00	0.00	0.24	0.24	0.56	0.56
5-10	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.02	0.11	0.11
11-15	0.00	0.00	0.07	0.07	0.33	0.33
16-18	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.02	0.17	0.17
Total	0.00	0.00	0.35	0.35	1.17	1.17

Intermediate houses

Age	Number of Bedrooms					
	0	1	2	3	4	5+
0-4	0.00	0.00	0.09	0.56	0.56	0.56
5-10	0.00	0.00	0.18	0.11	0.11	0.11
11-15	0.00	0.00	0.27	0.33	0.33	0.33
16-18	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.17	0.17	0.17
Total	0.00	0.00	0.55	1.17	1.17	1.17

New Housing Surveys: Wandsworth Council regularly undertakes surveys of new housing developments in the borough to assess how well housing and planning policies are working and how they can be improved. The surveys also seek information on the characteristics of households living in new build properties to inform planning of Council services. Population yield data enables the Council to assess the increased demand on local services as people move into new developments e.g. for doctors, schools and public transport. The information can be used to shape future planning policies and secure investment through developer negotiations when new development is proposed.

Survey Series: In 1997 and 2004, surveys of new housing developments were conducted, with questionnaires sent to households in new build developments completed in the Borough between 1994-1996 and 1997-2003 respectively. The 2007 New Housing Re-Survey revisited the sites originally surveyed in 1997 and 2004 to see how the composition and characteristics of these households has changed over time.

Population Yield Calculator Survey Sample: To enable direct comparison of results, the Population Yield Calculator uses data from sites originally surveyed in 2004 only. It compares the original survey data for these sites (2004 New Housing Survey) with re-survey data for these sites (2007 New Housing Re-Survey). In each survey, the same 4,144 dwellings were sent a questionnaire on 127 developments completed between 1997 and 2003.

Weighting: As the rate of response varied between developments, the responses used in this analysis have been weighted to remove any bias that may arise from this in line with standard statistical practice. The weights applied to individual developments reflect the overall response rate.

Response Rates: To qualify as a response for population yield analysis, questions relating to age, tenure, development type (house/flat) and number of bedrooms must have been answered by the household. In 2004 the weighted response rate for these questions was 47% (1,965 households) and in 2007 (2004 sites only) 35% (1,436 households), reflecting the overall survey response rates.

Wandsworth Council does not accept any responsibility for loss or liability occasioned as a result of usage of the data. It is provided for information only.

Contact: Christine Cook, 020 8871 7177,
ccook@wandsworth.gov.uk

Borough Planner's Service, Wandsworth Council,
London, SW18 2PU. www.wandsworth.gov.uk/planning/evidence.

APPENDIX 3 - INCLUSION

KIDS a national charity is working to create an inclusive world for disabled children, young people and their families, provides information, publications and briefings on inclusive play and childcare. They recommend that all children should be able to access equipment and play opportunities that are exciting and fun and offer various levels of challenges. Sensory experiences as well as the use of equipment that can be used in different ways by children at different stages of development and with differing levels of ability should be encouraged.

Their Playwork Inclusion Project (PIP), aimed at turning inclusive policy into inclusive practice, offers strategic development, information and guidance to authorities and settings on inclusive play and childcare see <http://www.kids.org.uk>. Their PIP Guidelines Series demonstrates good practice in inclusive design and is aimed at planners, designers, parks and leisure officers as well as early years, play and childcare providers who want to ensure that the design of their playspace is accessible, welcoming and inclusive. They have also published a useful guide called Inclusion by Design - a guide to creating accessible play and childcare environments¹.

The KIDS briefing on Inclusive Design For Play^{*2} recognises that a play environment cannot be adapted or designed for every need, nor can every item of play equipment be suitable for all children but as many physical and sensory impairments as possible should be taken into

account at the planning stage and good practice should be embedded from the very start of the design stage. This is illustrated by examples of good practice in delivering disabled children's access to inclusive play spaces using the six principles of inclusive design:

- Diversity and difference - recognising that children even with similar impairments will have different abilities, cultures and backgrounds so they should be involved in the consultation stage of any new project e.g. by consulting with a special school located near a playsite; involving disabled children and their parents in the community consultations; tailoring play equipment to children with different physical and sensory impairments with something that everyone can enjoy.
- Ease of use - children should not be forced to exert undue effort, experience discomfort or a loss of dignity - this has implications for the site location and orientation and choice of materials. Disabled children should have ease of access to and into the site and to the facilities within the site.
- Freedom of choice and access to mainstream activities - independent access along with support and assistance should be provided on the user's terms.
- Quality - design aimed at meeting the specific requirements of disabled children should be to the same standard as the rest of the development and should exceed

¹ Inclusion by Design - a guide to creating accessible play and childcare environments Clare Goodridge 2008 Ed. Philip Douch, KIDS 2009

² KIDS Briefing on Inclusive Design For Play signposts a number of other useful documents on inclusive play see <http://www.kids.org.uk>.

minimum standards resulting in innovative playful environments for all, e.g. equipment at different heights with adequate space between each piece, wheelchair accessible swings, roundabouts and slides; sensory gardens with plants children can smell and touch, imaginative landscapes using sand and water.

- Legibility and predictability – illustrated child friendly site plans can help orientation, signs that welcome disabled children in accessible formats e.g. pictures, tactile maps and pictograms and the use of tactile surfaces, colour and contrast.
- Safety – safe while inspiring a sense of risk e.g. the use of lighting, materials, finishes and tones can enhance the ability of visually impaired children to read and use spaces.

It goes on to set out the process of inclusive design – which

- Begins at the beginning
- Sees design and management of the built environment as inextricable partners
- Takes account of user experience at every stage of the development
- Is equally applicable to the development of landscapes, structure, materials and finishes, fixtures and fittings, management and information.

- Brings together functional and aesthetic considerations – works well and looks good
- Is regularly monitored and evaluated.

Further Information

KIDS' latest publication, and the final in the Playwork Inclusion Project series, 'Everybody's Business', offers all play, leisure and childcare providers practical advice, activities, and ideas on how best to include disabled children aged under eight years old in a range of play settings.

Nothing Special Including Young Disabled People in Youth and Leisure Services KIDS Briefing Paper <http://www.kids.org.uk/files/103886/FileName/nothingspecialv2.pdf> explains that inclusion is a process not a product, based on relationships, dialogue and respect offering a range of 'ordinary' opportunities to all, and involves 'ordinary' interaction of disabled and non-disabled young people, and works best when young people, families, and services participate, is young person-centred, modelled at the top in policies and 'plans' and is more than 'access'.

KIDS also has a toolkit which Local authorities can purchase to assess inclusion in policies, management and practice. This is a set of tools and guidelines aimed at organisations and how they can become more inclusive in their day to day service delivery.

APPENDIX 4 - USEFUL CONTACTS

London Plan/Planning Decisions Unit
Greater London Authority
City Hall
The Queen's walk
London
SE1 2AA
Tel: 020 7983 4100

Association of Play Industries (API)
Federation House
Stoneleigh Park
Warwickshire CV8 2RF
Tel: 024 76 414999

KIDS
6 Aztec Row
Berners Road
London
N10PW
Tel: 020 7359 8238

London Play
83-93 Fonthill Road
London
N4 3JH
Tel: 020 7272 2464

Play England
8 Wakley St
London
EC1V 7QE
Tel: 020 7843 6300

RoSPA
RoSPA House
Edgbaston Park
353 Bristol Road
Edgbaston
Birmingham
B5 7ST
Tel: 0121 248 2000

Sport England
3rd Floor Victoria House
Bloomsbury Square
London
WC1B 4SE
Tel: 08458 508508

Other formats and languages

For a large print, Braille, disc, sign language video or audio-tape version of this document, please contact us at the address below:

Public Liaison Unit

Greater London Authority
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
More London
London SE1 2AA

Telephone **020 7983 4100**

Minicom **020 7983 4458**

www.london.gov.uk

You will need to supply your name, your postal address and state the format and title of the publication you require.

If you would like a summary of this document in your language, please phone the number or contact us at the address above.

Chinese

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請致電以下號碼或與下列地址聯絡

Hindi

यदि आप इस दस्तावेज की प्रति अपनी
भाषा में चाहते हैं, तो कृपया निम्नलिखित
नंबर पर फोन करें अथवा नीचे दिये गये
पते पर संपर्क करें

Vietnamese

Nếu bạn muốn có văn bản tài liệu
này bằng ngôn ngữ của mình, hãy
liên hệ theo số điện thoại hoặc địa
chỉ dưới đây.

Bengali

আপনি যদি আপনার ভাষায় এই দলিলের প্রতিলিপি
(কপি) চান, তা হলে নীচের ফোন নম্বরে
বা ঠিকানায় অনুগ্রহ করে যোগাযোগ করুন।

Greek

Αν θέλετε να αποκτήσετε αντίγραφο του παρόντος
εγγράφου στη δική σας γλώσσα, παρακαλείστε να
επικοινωνήσετε τηλεφωνικά στον αριθμό αυτό ή ταχυ-
δρομικά στην παρακάτω διεύθυνση.

Urdu

اگر آپ اس دستاویز کی نقل اپنی زبان میں
چاہتے ہیں، تو براہ کرم نیچے دئے گئے نمبر
پر فون کریں یا دیئے گئے پتے پر رابطہ کریں

Turkish

Bu belgenin kendi dilinizde
hazırlanmış bir nüshasını
edinmek için, lütfen aşağıdaki
telefon numarasını arayınız
veya adrese başvurunuz.

Arabic

إذا أردت نسخة من هذه الوثيقة بلغتك، يرجى
الاتصال برقم الهاتف أو مراسلة العنوان
أدناه

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਦੀ ਕਾਪੀ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ
ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੇ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਫ਼ੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜਾਂ ਹੇਠ
ਲਿਖੇ ਪਤੇ 'ਤੇ ਰਾਬਤਾ ਕਰੋ:

Gujarati

જો તમને આ દસ્તાવેજની નકલ તમારી ભાષામાં
જોઈતી હોય તો, કૃપા કરી આપેલ નંબર ઉપર
ફોન કરો અથવા નીચેના સરનામે સંપર્ક સાધો.

MAYOR OF LONDON
